

TRP

THE RESONANCE PROJECT

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WELCOME TO HYPERSPACE

featuring the DMT Dossier
Terence McKenna
Alexander Shulgin
Rick Strassman, M.D.
Mimosa/Ascaso Datapoints

Plus Ibogaine, Burning Man, DPT, & the Entheogen Review



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Director

James Kent

Art & Design

ADM

Andrew Stalick

Weird Momma

Scott Serna

Senior Editor

Kimberly Cooperrider

Assistant Editor

Scott O. Moore

Contributors

Abrupt

Will Beifuss

Robert Campbell

Kyra Edeker

Earth Erowid

Fara of the Forest

Rev. Buddy Goodlove

Lamont Granquist

INNER GORILLA

K. Johansen

David Narlich

Evis Revbus

Snow

DJ Axis

National Distribution

RCS, Inc.

3700 Eagle Rock Blvd.

Los Angles, CA 90065

323 • 344 • 1200 voice

323 • 258 • 0626 fax

Act Rep: Lynna Johnson

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Resonant Media

323 Broadway Avenue East #318 • Seattle • WA • 98102

(206) 587-7177 • trp@resproject.com • <http://www.resproject.com>

Oblivion? Eternity? The end of time?

so just where the hell is Hyperspace?

HYPERSPACE - 1.) An accelerated or excited space. 2.) Any dimension above and beyond 3-D spacetime (commonly referred to as "reality"). So when looking for hyperspace, we would be searching for any space or dimension that exists above and beyond the reality we normally perceive. Many scholars, mathematicians, and mystics have spent many lifetimes attempting to discover exactly what and where hyperspace actually is, but the main problem of hyperspace is that *you can't actually see it*. You can't even poke at it. No matter how fervently or convincingly you argue or attempt to prove its existence, you can never really know if it's actually there.

Okay, so maybe that's hyperbole.

The truth is, if we had enough energy (and I'm talking about *a lot of energy*) we could conceivably open some kind of vortex to hyperspace. However, even if we had the energy of 100 suns to dedicate to this project, all we would get is a shaky, unstable, minuscule singularity barely the width of a photon. What would we do with that? Anything that went in would probably never come out, and the area around the singularity would bend and warp and cause all kinds of messy temporal and spacial distortions. Nope, unless our current sources of generating energy improve dramatically hyperspace will remain out of our physical reach. And because our senses are wired to perceive such a narrow spectrum of reality, it would seem we are forever banished to exist solely in the hard cold world of 3-D spacetime.

However, what if there were a way to experientially reproduce the phenomenon of existing in higher dimensional states? What if instead of bending space itself we could somehow bend the perceptual boundaries that limit our view of reality? What if there was some switch we could throw to blow open our default data-gathering settings so we could start receiving information on broadband instead of narrow-spectrum? Would you want to throw that switch? Would you want to take a look into hyperspace?

Of course you would. Who wouldn't?

There are only two good reasons I can think of why somebody would shy away from the experience of having their perceptual veils lifted. The first is that they are scared of what they might find. The mere thought of having one's ontology shattered into a million pieces at the flip of the switch can be somewhat jarring, no doubt. The second reason I can think of for refusing the experience is that it may be considered a cultural taboo. Either of these cases on its own would be good enough reason to avoid such things, but when the two forces are combined — ontological uneasiness and social pressures — they spell outright fear.

So what's so scary about hyperspace? Does it pose some kind of threat to our way of life? Is it the mythical boundary between life and death? Does it cross that thin line between reality and fantasy land, sanity and insanity? Does it hold secrets that mere mortals were never meant to behold? Whatever it is, it is a force to be reckoned with, and not to be stepped into lightly.

Having one's ontology shattered at the flip of a switch can be somewhat jarring...

Of the many ways people have attempted to grok hyperspace over the last few millennia, possibly the most interesting and controversial method has been the ingestion of DMT. DMT is not just another psychedelic drug to be studied and cataloged. No, it may very well be the Holy Grail to hyperspace so many have been looking for. Neurochemically speaking, DMT is like a synaptic skeleton key to hyper-consciousness. It is similar in structure to serotonin and other common neurotransmitters, and it fits in very nicely at most major receptor sites. When the neural matrix is suddenly flooded with this sublime substance, it is akin to having all of your neural switches instantaneously flipped on all at once. The effects are so dramatic that they are overwhelming, and some might even say astonishing.

When I tried DMT for the first time, it's true I was a bit startled. I was not expecting the substance of what I saw to be so *real*. I had the exhilarating feeling that I was fully awake for possibly the first time in my life. My eyes and ears were opened to a dimension of vision and sound that I could never have imagined existed. It was not just hallucination or simple perceptual distortion — that would have been easy to cope with. What I experienced was more like perceptual amplification and magnification, a full awakening of the senses. I could suddenly see jeweled detail and temporal depth in everything I looked at. Objects no longer held the illusion of solidity, but revealed themselves as distinct vibrational fields in constant transition through time. It was a life-changing experience, and one that has led me to remark that DMT may be "the single most exquisite substance on the entire planet."

What do I mean by that? Well, for starters, I never really comprehended just how complex and mysterious reality was until I first smoked DMT. I had received vague inklings of cosmic depth and quick glimpses into hidden forces via other transcendent experiences in my lifetime, but never had I witnessed the intricate processes which hold reality together on such a visceral level. Sub atomic, molecular, genetic, electromagnetic, and cosmic forces all became explicit before my eyes. These were no longer abstract concepts, but actual processes unfolding in real-time before my eyes. It was — how shall I say — *heavy*.

So with that heaviness in mind, let us step into the world of DMT and the bizarre hyperspace it evokes. These pages contain a multitude of new insights and new information into the understanding of this awe-inspiring chemical from some of today's most noted scholars. We may think that we are a fairly advanced civilization, but we are only now beginning to peel away at the thin layers of our reality. I doubt anyone is fully ready for what we will find, but I have no doubt that DMT is one of the keys to breaking through this barrier. The voyage has only but begun.

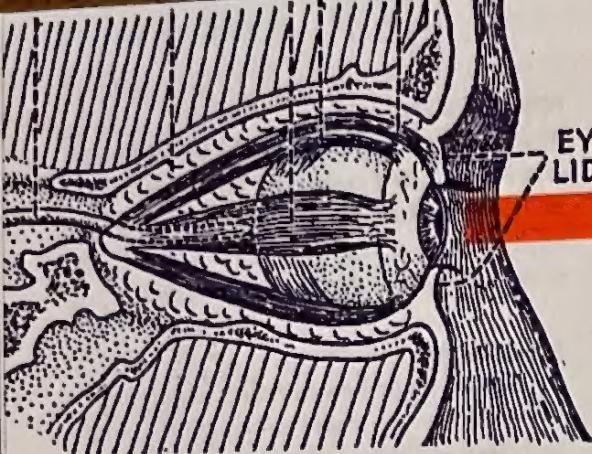
Ever onward and upward,
- James Kent

About the cover:

Abduction in Hyperspace is an original digital rendering created exclusively for TRP by David Nerlich of Australia. A full-length video of this voyage will be available soon. Please send comments to babel@toysatellite.com.au.

About the guts:

This issue of The Resonance Project was printed in two-color with soy-based PMS 2695CVC (purple body text) and PMS 1585CVC (orange background text) inks — odd choices we know, but we couldn't resist. The paper is 50# recycled white opaque book stock. Common fonts used include Emigre Triplex and Matrix families, and Adobe Futura and Gill Sans families. All pages laid out in Adobe PageMaker 6.5. Original art and illustrations created and/or digitized using Adobe Photoshop 5.0 and Macromedia Freehand 8.0. The TRP prepress operating system of choice is Macintosh, of course.



insights • viewpoints • vantages

Hey TRP:

I enjoy your publication. I find it provides technical information as well as directional insight for explorers. In a news posting somewhere I found with a search engine I read the following: Using the PF method of psilocybin production, the mushrooms will add a 4-OH molecule to any tryptamine that they are fed. The post suggested that certain tryptamines could become psychoactive after this change. This post gave no references to the source of this information. Does anyone have any info on this? I think an article on re-engineered "hot rod" ethnobotanicals would be very interesting.

Thanks,
yarko

INVERTED IMAGE
There has been a lot of discussion about adding legal tryptamines (non-psychoactive) to the substrate or using high-tryptamine content plants as substrate additives. To the best of our knowledge (which is admittedly non-comprehensive), several people have tried this out but the results are inconclusive or failures. We would suggest that it is still an open question as to whether adding tryptamines to the substrate of *P. cubensis* would have any interesting effect, but any research done can be submitted to submissions@erowid.org and we'll try to keep track of it. — TRP

Hey TRP:

I have heard that large doses of Dramamine can have psychedelic effects, including very concrete hallucinations. What is the psychoactive ingredient in Dramamine, and how does it affect the body and the mind?

Thanks,
Peregrine

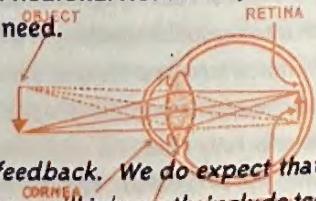
INVERTED IMAGE
We consulted the TRP Anecdotal Evidence Hotline, and came up with a few tidbits for you. One correspondent reported, "Marazine is the one I'm more familiar with. We took 9 Marazine. It was enough. I won't do it again, but it was sorta interesting, enough to see crazy things." When asked if he saw concrete hallucinations, he reported, "The most concrete

ever, yes. Where with LSD you tend to see things morph into other things, like a rope into a snake, with this you could look at a blank wall and have a buffalo jump out of it and run off, much like datura. My friend was watching my arm and said that a little UFO grew out of my skin and buzzed away. It impaired movement quite a lot; there was some falling over as I recall. I remember lying on my side and feeling like one leg was crushing the other. I don't recommend it." Another correspondent reported: "I have heard that taking large amounts of Dramamine is totally nasty, and that taking enough Dramamine for psychedelic effects is a very bad idea." Please check out the Dramamine FAQ at http://www.erowid.org/pharms/dramamine/dramamine_faq.shtml for further information on Dramamine, Marazine, Benadryl, and other over-the-counter anticholinergics/antihistamines. Keep in mind, folks, this FAQ lists as side effects "blurred vision, difficult or painful urination, increased sensitivity to the sun, loss of appetite, nightmares, rash, ringing or buzzing in the ears, and dry mouth, nose, or throat." The FAQ also notes that "rumors persist of brain/stomach damage resulting from frequent use of diphenhydramine HCl and similar drugs. Also there is a risk of liver/kidney damage." And finally, the FAQ points out that the LD₅₀ in humans is not known. TRP's sage advice: always educate yourselves as thoroughly as possible before diving into any kind of chemical exploration. Know the risks inside and out, and decide for yourself if the risk is worth taking. But it sounds to us, if we had to offer an opinion, that this particular source of recreation is not worth the body load. — TRP

Hey TRP:

I picked up TRP2 because of the computer/internet related articles. Simply amazing. I have experimented a few times with acid, but am not a regular user of it nor any other drugs. Although the drug articles aren't necessarily of interest, your other subject matter is right up my alley (and sure, I'm still curious about the above mentioned). I have a B.S. in computer science and have an interest in mind expanding. Your articles, such as "Virtual Neuronal Networks", are thought provoking, and just what I need.

Thanks TRP,
anonymous



Thanks for the feedback. We do expect that as time goes on, TRP's general focus will inherently include technological issues related to our society and related to the use of entheogens. In the meantime, we firmly believe you need not be a regular

musings • ramblings • feedback • et cetera

user of entheogenic substances to appreciate the issues involved with humanity's exploration of altered states of consciousness. (Which is our way of saying — sorry, no computer/internet stuff in TRP4, but read it anyway, it's good for ya!) — TRP

Hey TRP:

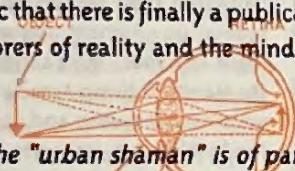
You are publishing one of the most important magazines of my generation and renewing my hope in humanity.

Thank you,
Ghamal de la Guardia

Thanks, Ghamal. Tell your friends. There's a lot in store for the future of TRP, and we need to get the word out. — TRP

Hey TRP:

Just stopped in to say howdy foax. So far (avid reader of first three issues), I really enjoy the mag. As there was already a magazine out for every special interest from alpha to omega, I'm truly ekstatic that there is finally a publication for shamans, and other explorers of reality and the mind.



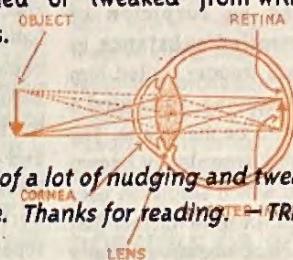
dead joe

The notion of the "urban shaman" is of particular interest to us these days (see our interview with Alexander Shulgin on page 51 of this issue). The term "shaman" implies a cultural context that readers of this magazine do not necessarily share either with indigenous shamans in various spots around the globe, or even with each other, scattered as we are throughout a very particular kind of underground. Hopefully TRP will be able to contribute to the ongoing self-organization of our community by helping to make assumptions explicit about modern entheogenic practice and exploration, and doing so in a creative, intelligent fashion. (If that doesn't work, our backup plan is to begin immediate full coverage of the burgeoning renewal of roller derby as a television phenomenon. Stay tuned!) — TRP

Hey TRP:

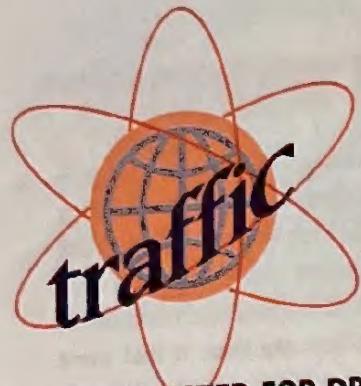
I have been doing psychotropics since about 1965/1966. Lots of personal psychological work with and without psychotropics ultimately led (c. 1984) to the beginnings of an exploration of the positive linkage between psychotropics and meditation and what might result. Largely an experimental hobby with (deliberately) little planning or documentation, I have tried with increasing "success" to follow the "experience" produced by ingesting various alkaloids and then spending the trip in

meditation. Your Project is — unless I misapprehend it — identical to the one I've been engaged in for some time with a deliberate haphazardness. My suspicion is that consciousness has yet to live up to the realities apparent to it — that it probably keeps making silly and serious and horrendous mistakes at the level of language and perception. My hope is that some kind of bridging can occur that has only so far been glimpsed. I see it as both personal and not. Certainly, a hunch, and one worth pursuing. I think (perhaps hope), at the very least, that this reality (this highly restricted version we live in anyway) can be "nudged" or "tweaked" from within altered states of consciousness.



Best wishes,
Robert McDonell

There's a hell of a lot of nudging and tweaking to do, Robert, that's for sure. Thanks for reading. — TRP



MAN BUSTED FOR DRIVING UNDER THE INFLUENCE OF ROSEMARY

September 29 — Organic farmer George Singleton was jailed on suspicion of possession of a controlled substance in Oklahoma, after a state trooper pulled him over for speeding and weaving, and found a bag of what appeared to be marijuana. The marijuana was actually organically grown rosemary and mullein, which Singleton uses to treat his tuberculosis. Despite the fact that his blood tests came back negative for any intoxicating substance, he still faces charges of driving under the influence of an intoxicating substance. According to Gene Haynes, the Craig County, OK, district attorney: "It is an unusual case because of the fact that we don't have proof of any illegal substance. We're continuing to pursue it because we feel he was under some type of influence that rendered him a danger on the roadway." The trooper claimed in his report that Singleton was unsteady on his feet and had bloodshot eyes and slurred speech. Singleton runs an organic farm in Virginia and was traveling back from California, where he works with inner city gangs as part of Hope-LA-USA, a national group he helped found which tries to convince gang members to try organic gardening.

According to Singleton's lawyer, Jim Hadley, "He's not guilty of anything but being black and having butt-long dreadlocks and driving in Oklahoma." At one point officials intended to charge Singleton with carrying "an imitation controlled substance," which is a crime in Oklahoma, but authorities later decided that rosemary and mullein constituted an inadequate imitation. The D.A. eventually offered to drop the charge to careless driving, and impose a \$50 fine and court costs of less than \$100, but Singleton refused to play ball. Singleton: "I'm not scared of dealing with fascist government people because that's all I've been dealing with all my life. This is normal for me. This is the dark side of America."

ELEMENTARY SCHOOL STUDENTS INGEST STRANGE UNIDENTIFIED SUBSTANCES

September 24 — Fourteen elementary school students "became dizzy and began hallucinating" after one student found a box containing a powder and a vial of liquid, brought the box to school, and began passing the substances out to her classmates. The 9- and 10-year-old students at Haddon Avenue Elementary School in the San Fernando Valley, north of Los Angeles, were taken to two separate hospitals after becoming sick from the substances. Police Lt. Rick Papke reported, "They were completely disoriented, acting irrationally. Their symptoms were of those who had ingested a controlled substance."

At the time of this report, lab tests were still needed to determine the exact substances in question, though hospital officials did rule out marijuana, amphetamines, PCP, and "angel dust". Dr. Michael Sarti of Providence Holy-Cross hospital believed the substance in question was LSD, based on the fact that the children "were seeing colors and things that aren't there". In his opinion, "It sounds like a hallucinogen, like LSD. We had a hiatus on LSD, but it seems to be coming back in vogue." According to 9-year-old Edgar Macias, who was offered some of the substance but respectfully declined to take any, "They all started getting dizzy. One kid was crying."

No word yet as to whether similar lab tests will be performed on any of the "cafeteria food" these children are routinely subjected to as part of their school day, despite similar evidence that these substances also seem to make children dizzy and sick.

MAN ARRESTED FOR SMOKING WITH THE INFANT JESUS

September 29 — In Eastport, New York, an 18-year-old man was arrested for possessing a stolen statue of the infant Jesus that had been turned into a bong. The statue's stomach and head had been hollowed out for the purpose. Police are still searching for other

missing items, including another Jesus, seven sheep statues, a Joseph, and a Nativity crib, all stolen from the Shrine of Our Lady of the Island. TRP suspects the sheep are currently being used as vaporizers, Joseph has been converted into an intravenous drip, and the Nativity crib is now playing a major role in a clandestine methamphetamine lab, but these suspicions are currently unconfirmed. A spokesman for Our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ commented, "This just makes me sick."

HEMP GROWING ON THE RISE

October 14 — Canadian hemp growers just harvested their first hemp crop since their federal government approved farming the plant last year. Mike Langtry, a member of the Manitoba Hemp Association, said, "There were between 1,000 and 1,200 acres seeded. Seed yields this year were between 900 and 1,000 pounds per acre, with high-fibre yields." Industrial hemp differs from the plant used to grow marijuana only in that it has far less of the drug and is used in the production of food, fuel, paper, rope, and textiles. However, hemp crops are routinely checked for drug levels by Canada's health ministry. "I can see hemp beginning as an interest crop, with development of the infrastructure for primary, secondary and tertiary processing developing in Manitoba," Langtry said. He also predicts that hemp will become as strong of a crop in the next five years as canola is now, covering six million hectares. Langtry added that he believes that support for hemp production is bolstered by The Body Shop's decision to sell hemp skin care products. Hemp production is illegal in the United States, and Langtry said, "That's good for Canada because now we get to develop the infrastructure and technology." He also noted that development would rely on European and Australian research. Australia will begin planting its first commercial crop this year, and farmers are queuing up to grow it. 200 hectares of Australian land will be devoted to the hemp crop with plans for exportation.

POT & THE WHITE HOUSE

Heather Gordon, a George Washington University graduate student from Miami, was denied an internship at the White House because she admitted to experimentation with marijuana in college. The Florida State News Wire commented, "Call it a triple-standard. President Clinton got a White House job after admitting to trying marijuana without inhaling. Vice President Al Gore got a White House job after admitting to smoking marijuana while in college and Vietnam." The future hopes of many a TRP staffer have been dashed by this devastating news, but if TRP-sponsored "don't ask, don't tell" legislation goes through, all this could change; we'll keep you posted.

SWISS LOOPHOLE CLOSED

For three years, domestic pot trade in Switzerland has boomed due to a loophole in the law. The Swiss narcotics law refers to "hemp when it is cultivated in order to produce a narcotic." This nebulous wording encouraged the sale of aromatic sachets full of dried leaves and buds labeled "not for consumption." There are now over 200 of these smelly hemp shops, 50 of them in Zurich. Bruno Hildebrand, a shop owner, was sentenced to a suspended 14 months and a 120,000 francs by Zurich district Judge Thomas Meyer who ruled that dried hemp was an illegal narcotic regardless of its labeling. TRP's Swiss sources report that Swiss shops currently selling aromatic sachets containing piles of strange white powder "not for consumption" are reportedly "reconsidering this whole line of work, man, whoa."

DRUG TRAFFICKING RABBI

73 year old Eli Gottesman, a former "Rabbi of the Year," was charged with attempting to provide contraband to inmates at the Federal Correctional Institute in Albany, New York. Gottesman was found entering the institute with a Pert Plus shampoo bottle containing cocaine and marijuana. He pleaded innocent to the charges, saying, "God knows I didn't do anything wrong. I was tricked." Gottesman had a contract with five federal prisons since 1984, providing religious services to Jewish inmates, that has been terminated. Brian Premo, Gottesman's lawyer, said, "Obviously he's upset. He's a religious man who's spent his whole life trying to help people." Inmates at the correctional institute are outraged; one anonymous source said, "Look, man, we need our Pert Plus."

HAMBURGER JOINT HAD HASH

October 9 — German police closed down a snack bar located in downtown Kiel after long-term surveillance discovered that the menu consisted solely of hashish. The police said in a statement, "During the entire time, food was not sold on a single occasion." The statement continued, "It transpired later that the accused did not even know how to operate the kitchen equipment."

AMISH COCAINE DEALERS

October 5 — Abner King Stoltzfus and Abner Stoltzfus (unrelated, it is a common Amish name), pleaded guilty to conspiring to sell cocaine to fellow Amish and could face five to 40 years in prison and up to \$2 million in fines. Eight members of the Pagans, a Philadelphia-area motorcycle gang that supplied the cocaine, have also been charged. The indictment took place during a time when the Stoltzfus' were in a "timeout," when Amish young are encouraged to explore the outside world. Amish churches have had problems with alcohol and marijuana use, and the discovery of cocaine led the community's bishops to warn all of the Amish churches.

MIDDLE SCHOOLERS BUY POT

Students at the Grand Junction, Colorado middle school between the ages of 13 and 15 have been arrested or suspended under marijuana charges. According to the Colorado State News Wire, "Police say the deal involved less than ten dollars worth of pot."

CANNABIS COMMANDOS

September 25 — Deep within the California forests, men dressed in camouflage fatigues are dropping from helicopters with a survival kit on one hip and a semi-automatic pistol on the other. These agents of CAMP, Campaign Against Marijuana Planting, are former military intelligence, undercover agents, local sheriff's deputies, Justice Department agents, or state Highway Patrol officers. They search and destroy marijuana gardens throughout California and take pride in their work. Mendocino County Sheriff's deputy Bill Rutler said, "Every time I bury a ton of dope, that's a ton of dope that's not getting smoked," and Randy Rimmey said, "I get the satisfaction that I'm depriving them of something illegal. I'm not here to decide if a law is morally correct. A law is a law." Throughout the 300 raids this season, only 60 arrests have been made, presumably because the noise from the

helicopters used warns workers. Officers joke that their operation has encouraged larger marijuana production; extra gardens are often planted as decoys for the agents to find. Says Rimmey, "If they retain one of five gardens they're happy." A hearty TRP salute goes out to these cannabis commandos, especially since the definition of "a ton of dope" could easily be expanded to include troublemakers, people with unpopular opinions, and of course, enemies of the state.

EPHEDRA UNDER FIRE

September 18 — Ephedrine and Pseudoephedrine dietary supplement "mixtures" with over 2% concentrations could become subject to the Controlled Substances Act. This will require companies producing these mixtures to establish recordkeeping and reporting procedures. These measures are being taken to prevent Ephedrine and Pseudoephedrine from being used as precursors for methamphetamine.

POPSICLE OR POT?

September 3 — A Brooklyn, New York, ice cream truck was found to be selling teenagers marijuana and hashish along with the usual frozen treats. The truck was seized by police, and two men, Alexy Zagrebin and James Lapointe, were charged, but the ice cream was returned to Zagrebin's family.

GANGS USE CHILDREN TO DELIVER COCAINE

September 18 — Drug gangs stretching from Honduras to Canada have begun using Honduran children, aged 10-13, to transport and sell cocaine in Canada. It is suspected that approximately 200 children are being used, and many have been found in Canadian hospitals after injecting crack stones. Casa Alianza, a pressure group, is sending investigators to try to rescue the children.

LAUNDRY COCAINE

September 17 — A woman purchased a bottle of fabric softener at a shop in Scottsboro that sells unclaimed baggage. Instead of fabric softener, she found a latex glove filled with a white powder. The sheriff was called in to investigate and identified the powder as cocaine. In light of this news, TRP's new "Buy all the unclaimed baggage you can!" campaign gets underway next week. Unused fabric softener from this campaign will of course be donated to the Scottsboro sheriff's department.

AT HOME DRUG TESTS

October 16 — Phamatech of San Diego has developed the first nonprescription urine sampling kit to be approved by the Food and Drug Administration. The product is called The QuickScreen At Home Drug Test, and will apparently be marketed to the parents of rebellious problem teens as the "suspicious, controlling, so you can test medicine". Its two models test for cocaine, marijuana, opiates, PCP, amphetamine and methamphetamine.

STRUNG OUT IN NEW YORK

September 30 — The Clinton administration Tuesday announced plans to expand methadone treatment to all opiate addicts who request or need it, including administration by doctors in their offices. New York Mayor Rudolph Giuliani opposes the plans, saying "I think that morally, philosophically and practically, it's a bad direction for America... What that will mean is more and more New Yorkers dependent, more and more New Yorkers unable to take care of themselves". New York State is currently the largest methadone provider in the United States, serving as a mecca for people of eight other states which do not permit methadone clinics. Those states are New Hampshire, Vermont, West Virginia, Mississippi, North Dakota, South Dakota, Montana and Idaho. Studies done in the United States and in Europe have demonstrated that addicts who complete supervised methadone treatment programs decrease their drug use and criminal activity, and boast an increase in social functioning and physical health.

AND NOW, THE WEATHER

October 13 — Marijuana farmers in Florida have felt the effects of floods, droughts and forest fires this year. The Florida Department of Law Enforcement says it has only uprooted 50,000 plants since mid-April. The agents have only found half of the pot plants they would have found under normal conditions, but reassure us that growers from other states will jump into the Florida pot market.

U.S. HIGH COURT

October 6 — Public high schools can now require drug tests for all students involved in extracurricular activities, the U.S. Supreme Court has decided. Prior to the Rushville, Indiana case, the law only upheld drug tests for student athletes.

HELICOPTERS FOR COLUMBIA

September 15 — Under a compromise agreement heavily promoted by General Barry "Drug Czar" McCaffrey, the federal government's anti-smuggling budget will grow by about \$690 million this fiscal year. Republicans immediately pronounced this agreement a major victory for their goal to sway U.S. drug policy away from the 'lax' Clintonian emphasis on education and prevention, towards a policy heavy on enforcement and punishment. "Our families and children will be better protected from the scourge of drugs and violence, thanks to the Republican Congress," Rep. Dennis Hastert, R-Ill., told reporters. Among other things, the legislation provides funds for U.S. aircraft and helicopters to be sent to Bolivia, Columbia and Peru for the eradication of drug crops. This prompted Rep. Benjamin Gilman, R-NY, to proudly announce that "while the administration has fought the Congress tooth and nail over the last few years to prevent the provision of badly needed high performance helicopters

to the Columbians, we Republicans have prevailed. None too early, I might add, as the heroin crisis in America grows out of control."

MUTANT MICE

October 20 — In a less than shocking study performed by researchers at Oregon Health Sciences University, alcohol consumption has been linked to the pleasure-regulating neurotransmitter dopamine. Scientists found that mice lacking the D2 dopamine receptor (which are therefore less sensitive to dopamine's effects) drank about half as much alcohol as their receptor-possessing siblings. They also appeared to be less vulnerable to some of alcohol's notorious side effects, stumbling (and presumably, vomiting) less while under the influence. "The normal littermates showed reduced locomotion following an injection of alcohol while the locomotion of the mutant mice did not change," commented Tamara Phillips, the head of the study team. TRP has learned that the next study includes taking the rats on little test drives in Barbie's Malibu Mustang convertible, and seeing which mice crash more often.

MORE MUTANT MICE

October 19 — In another rodent-based neurological breakthrough, a researcher from Duke University found that cocaine appears to affect the levels of both dopamine and serotonin in the brain. Cocaine has long been linked to dopamine, so scientist Marc Caron decided to test the effects of cocaine on mice genetically engineered so that they were unable to reabsorb dopamine. These mice, with naturally elevated dopamine levels, were already manic, but they still ingested as much cocaine as they possibly could. Further study showed that serotonin levels were also elevated by cocaine. Since most current cocaine addiction treatments attempt to control cocaine usage by altering dopamine levels by other means, this might just shed some light as to why these treatments are so notoriously ineffective.

TALEBAN OFFERS WORLD A BRIBE

October 6 — The Taliban, the fundamentalist Islamic leaders of Afghanistan, have offered to stop growing opium poppies in exchange for U.N. recognition as the government of the country. Currently only Pakistan, Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates recognize the Taliban as the government of Afghanistan. The Taliban, which says it is on a mission to "create the world's purest Moslem state," imposes the death penalty for drug use but doesn't seem to have a problem exporting heroin to the "heathen states" of the West. In a related story, Kenny, a thirteen year old from Kansas, has pledged to stop smoking pot and jacking off if the U.S. government will recognize him as a sovereign entity.

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The Medical Marijuana Debate

Congress, Science, and the People

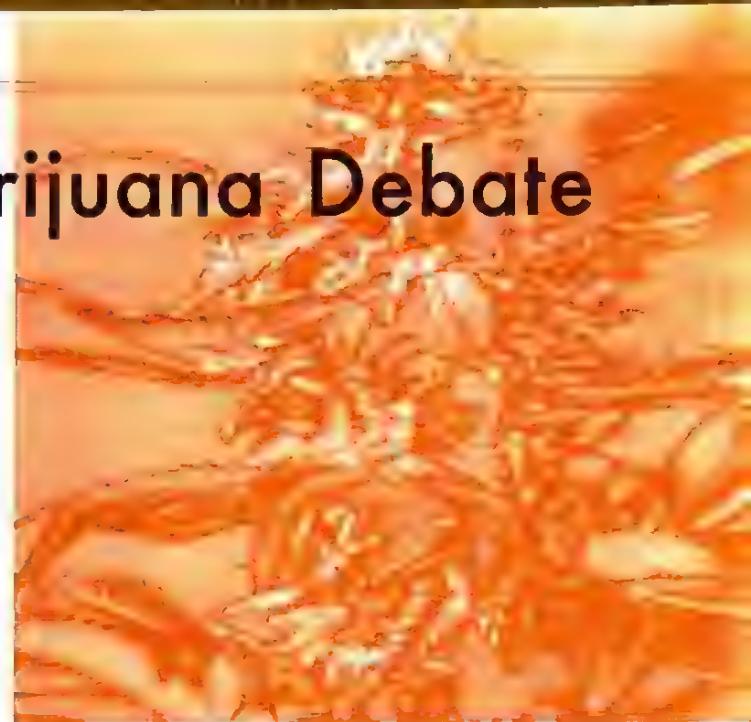
by Kimberly Cooperrider

For anyone who has ever wondered if the US House of Representatives really does have our best interests at heart – fear no more. On September 15th of last year the House made time in its heavy schedule to issue a resolution aimed at protecting hapless citizens from one of the most pernicious evils facing society – medical marijuana. The House Joint Resolution 117, which “[expresses] the sense of Congress that marijuana is a dangerous and addictive drug and should not be legalized for medical use”, was passed by a vote of 310 to 93. The bill was sponsored by Republican Representative Bill McCollum of Florida and garnered bi-partisan support, although some crazy Democrats did accuse the Republicans of grandstanding in order to win votes in the November elections.

And indeed it is a good thing the House acted as it did, as otherwise our impressionable minds may have been swayed by a recent National Institute of Mental Health (NIMH) study suggesting that cannabinoids in marijuana can prevent brain damage in stroke victims, Alzheimer's and Parkinson's patients, and perhaps those suffering from heart attacks. Or we might have been impressed by the results published in the September 24th issue of *Nature*, proving that cannabinoids containing THC are potent analgesics that deliver true pain relief. As it is, however, we have Joint Resolution 117 to keep us on the straight and narrow.

All facetiousness aside, one would assume that for the presumably busy members of the House to take the time to reaffirm something that has been stated time and time again – that Congress thinks marijuana is a bad drug whose risks far outweigh any purported benefits – there would have to be some startling new evidence bolstering this belief. However, the opposite seems to be true. Study results supporting the contentions of medical marijuana backers continue to trickle in, and voter initiatives rode on the ballot in several states last fall. The medical studies into marijuana and its active ingredient THC assume added importance because there have been so few reputable studies done in the past due to the federal government's reluctance to allow research into the medical properties of marijuana. It is this background that makes the most recent studies so important, and the statement by the House Republican Conference that “marijuana not only contains no plausible medicinal benefits, but is harmful to one's health when smoked”, so absurd.

At the July 7th proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences, researchers from the NIMH, the National Institute of Neurological Disorders and Stroke (NINOS) and the National Cancer Institute (NCI) reported on their research into cannabidiol's efficacy as an antioxidant which can prevent brain cell death. The neuroprotective properties of the cannabinoids “matched or surpassed other antioxidants in the cell culture model.” The cannabinoids appear to work by blocking the effects of glutamate in the brain, which when released by dying cells during a stroke triggers the death of other cells.



Perhaps more heartening to advocates of legalizing marijuana for medical purposes is the report in the journal *Nature* reporting that active ingredients in marijuana provide pain relief by stimulating parts of the brain that are also stimulated by opiate drugs, but without the side effects. In fact, the only side effect of marijuana seems to be that it increases appetite, which may actually be beneficial for treating those suffering from wasting diseases such as AIDS.

Dr. Ian Meng and researchers from the University of California in San Francisco tested the effects of synthetic cannabinoids on the region of the brain called the rostral ventromedial medulla (RVM). They tested the pain-relieving effects of the drug by measuring the time it took for rats to move their tails away from a heat source. Rats given the drug kept their tails on the heat much longer than the control group. “In my mind, the case for using cannabinoids for pain has definitely been made,” Meng said.

The House Resolution did not address either of these recent studies, instead repeating old canards such as “numerous safe and effective [alternatives] are available”, “marijuana is not a medicine”, and “the evidence of the last 2 years indicates that the more the public learns about the facts behind the ‘medical’ marijuana campaign, the more strongly opposed the public becomes to such initiatives.” This last statement seems particularly uninformed considering the number of medical marijuana initiatives that have already made it to the ballot and passed.

Four states and the District of Columbia had measures dealing with medical marijuana on the ballot last November. Nevada, Washington state, Colorado and Alaska all approved measures allowing doctors to prescribe marijuana in some cases. Congress blocked the initiative in Washington D.C., preventing the elections commission from announcing the results of the vote, and the Colorado vote failed on a technicality. Two states voted on anti-marijuana statutes: Proposition 300 in Arizona would have negated the legalization of medical marijuana passed in 1996, and in Oregon Proposition 57 would have increased the penalty for possession of cannabis. These propositions were rejected by voters in both states. In this case, it seems pretty clear what the people want. [-]

MDMA NEUROTOXICITY

RECENT STUDIES & NEW PERSPECTIVES

BY EARTH EROWID - 11 DECEMBER 1998



The drug Ecstasy causes brain damage in people who take it frequently, scientists have proved.... The capacity for thought, memory and emotion is impaired," or so *The Times* of London reported the results of a recent study

into the long term effects of MDMA on the structure and chemistry of the brain.[a] The study, published in *The Lancet* medical journal at the end of October, was conducted by Dr. U.D. McCann, George Ricaurte, and colleagues, and is another in a series of studies indicating that MDMA may cause semi-permanent changes in the functioning of serotonin neurons. It involved some of the most sensitive brain imaging techniques to date, using PET (Positron Emissions Tomography) scans to study the brains of 15 control individuals and 14 men and women who had ingested MDMA between 70 and 400 times, from 1 to 16 times per month, at dosages estimated by the researchers to be between 150 and 1250 mg.

As part of the study, each subject was injected with a radioactive marker that selectively binds to 5-HT transporters (serotonin re-uptake sites) on the axons of 5-HT neurons. Transporters are protein structures embedded in the membranes of nerve endings that are part of the inter-neuron communication system. The test showed that the marked chemical bound to an average of 22% fewer 5-HT transporter sites in measured areas of the brains of MDMA users than non-users. The researchers believe that this reduced binding indicates that the transporters have been destroyed and the serotonin neurons are damaged. Some dispute this interpretation and point out that reduced binding could also indicate neuroregulation similar to that

produced by Prozac or other SSRIs.[b] While this study shows the most direct evidence so far that heavy MDMA users may have lower serotonin levels than non-users, it does not demonstrate that MDMA causes reductions in serotonin transporters.

Unfortunately, the study, its press release, and the media reports surrounding it do not stop at reporting the measured data. They assert that not only is there a measurable difference in the amount of binding to 5-HT transporter sites, but they conclude that this difference is caused by the use of MDMA, that increased use causes further decreases in serotonin levels, that reduced 5-HT binding constitutes "brain damage", and that this "damage" may have negative consequences including "depression, anxiety, memory disturbance, and other neuropsychiatric disorders".[c]

Critics of the study point out several possible weaknesses in the assumption that MDMA is the cause of the differences in 5-HT transporter binding. First, with only 14 MDMA-using participants in the study, the sample is extremely small. Second, McCann-Ricaurte assume that other drugs played no role in whatever changes occurred, yet they did not attempt to control for exposure to drugs other than MDMA, MDA, and MDE.[d] The MDMA-using subjects may have taken large amounts of many other drugs and it is very likely that they unwittingly took MDMA mixed with an unknown assortment of adulterants.[e] Third, the researchers mistakenly assume they can know that the differences between study subjects did not predate their ingestion of MDMA. From this type of study, there is no way of knowing that the MDMA-using subjects did not have naturally lower

5-HT transporter binding levels before their MDMA use. McCann et al. argue that "since none of the MDMA users had a neuropsychiatric disorder in which 5-HT has been implicated, [the possibility that the lower levels preexisted] is unlikely." But this logic is flawed. Neither the MDMA nor control subjects were found to have any disorders, and their binding levels were different, so lack of disorder cannot be used as an indicator of 5-HT levels. Also, since even the heaviest users had levels within the range of levels found in non-users, the differences between the two groups could be accounted for by improperly matched subject groups. Some researchers point out that the criteria for selecting subjects from the pool of available MDMA users is not included in the published study. [f] It is quite possible that these heavy MDMA users belong to a group with naturally lower 5-HT binding levels and that lower levels may even correspond to an increased likelihood to use MDMA.

McCann-Ricaurte also assert that they demonstrate a "strong" correlation between increased MDMA use and increasingly lower levels of the 5-HT transporter. "Scans tended to [show lower levels] in those who had taken the drug more often." [g] This correlation has been questioned by several critics of the paper because it is based on controversial readings of the data. Specifically, the calculation of the "strong correlation" includes both the controls and the MDMA users which improperly weights the analysis by exaggerating the influence of the control group. The removal of the controls and a single MDMA user from the equation causes the apparent correlation to disappear. [h,i] Both groups of subjects showed substantial variation between individual 5-HT transporter binding levels and all but one of the MDMA users fell within the same overall range as the non-users. The most that can be said is that the MDMA users tended to cluster near the lower end of the overall range. Even Ricaurte reportedly does not consider the correlation between increased use and further decreased levels to be a primary finding of the paper because the small size of the study may make extrapolations from the data inaccurate or misleading.

The published study and its press release refer to the differences in 5-HT transporter levels as "brain damage". Whether one calls these differences in neurochemistry "brain damage" or not appears to be mostly a question of perspective. Opponents of MDMA's therapeutic and recreational use argue that any reduction in available serotonin (or in this case transporters) should be considered "neural injury" and that "potential functional consequences of MDMA-induced brain 5-HT neurotoxic lesions are not yet clear, but may include depression, anxiety, memory disturbance, and other

neuropsychiatric disorders in which brain 5-HT has been implicated." [c] All too frequently, negative speculations by researchers are misread as scientific "proof" when it comes to recreationally used psychoactives. [j]

Proponents of MDMA therapy and critics of the designation "brain damage" point out that there is little to no evidence that heavy MDMA users experience any functional problems. Optimists suggest that it is even possible that MDMA-precipitated neurochemical changes are positive. Administration of SSRI antidepressants such as Prozac cause

similar reductions in 5-HT transporters [b] and one study found that MDMA users were "less impulsive, more harm-avoidant, and had decreased hostility," [k] a finding which is at odds with what researchers expect to see in people with abnormally low serotonin levels. As mentioned earlier, the subjects in the study were tested for "axis I psychiatric disorders". Only subjects who

were both heavy MDMA users

and free of psychiatric problems were chosen for the study. If the researchers are right that the lower levels of 5-HT transporters can lead to "neuropsychiatric disorders", why do none of the heavy MDMA users studied have any of these problems?

One explanation given by reporters is the "Time Bomb" theory, which suggests that as users age, their past use will come back to haunt them: "Users of the drug would be likely to have a higher incidence of depression in later life." [l] But there is no evidence to support this theory. While other neurotransmitter systems have been shown to decline with age (dopamine, for example), serotonin has not been shown to decline over time. While caution is prudent, this speculation is refuted by current knowledge about serotonin.

An additional criticism is that the study's findings do not point out that the level of MDMA use exhibited by the subjects is extremely high, well above the levels used in therapeutic contexts or by most recreational users. The reported average dose is 386 milligrams with maximum doses estimated at 1250 mg, where the normal dose of MDMA is between 100 and 200 mgs. Animal studies suggest that even a single very high dose of MDMA can cause long term changes (and damage) to the 5-HT system, while Ricaurte himself showed that in non-human primates lower doses (2.5 mg per kg) administered every two weeks for four months had no measurable effect. By failing to point this out where the study mentions potential long term health consequences, the non-expert reader is left to incorrectly assume that even carefully controlled therapeutic use of MDMA causes "brain damage".

Considering that there are few long time users of MDMA who report

permanent negative health consequences, that preliminary research has failed to detect serious clinical problems [c, m, n], and that MDMA has been used therapeutically and recreationally for over 15 years, the practical negative health consequences of moderate MDMA use are likely to be subtle and may even be non-existent. For most users, the dangers associated with ingesting "street E" of unknown quality are far more concrete.

But neither should the research be ignored. Prospective users of MDMA should weigh carefully the collected data before swallowing their next dose. Individuals who choose to take the risk of long term changes to their neurophysiology make themselves research subjects in an uncontrolled investigation of the long term effects of their chosen psychoactives. Will we live to regret our decisions? Will those users who choose to use more heavily be prone to problems later in life?

In choosing how to live, we assume known and unknown risks every day. We weigh benefits against risks and choose a path based on our own unique situation. Learning a sense of appropriate risk is part of maturing into ourselves as fragile living creatures. Yet in most of the world, political and social organizations have tried to take the freedom to decide whether to ingest a psychoactive away

from the individual, under the auspices of protecting citizens from psychological and physical harm. Any risk is considered too great a risk: "Any non-medical use is abuse." [o] This extreme position fails to minimize physical and mental harms because it offers no practical knowledge of how to make intelligent choices in real situations. Instead, our communities and governments should encourage people to become aware of the risks and help them relate to psychoactives more responsibly.

For millions of MDMA users there is little trust in the dire "scientific" claims of brain decay. Unless verified individual dysfunctions surface, or at least reliable anecdotal reports of problems, users will remain jaded and unconvinced, hardened by warning after hyperbolic warning of imminent "Murder! Insanity! Death!" [p] Despite claims by popular news media and medical "experts" that we now have "direct evidence" that MDMA is harmful to man [q], the question of how much risk is still far from answered.

Comments and rebuttals welcomed: earth@erowid.org. More information on this study can be found at: <http://www.erowid.org/mdma/ricaerte/>

COMMENTARY: MDMA NEUROTOXICITY

BY LAMONT GRANQUIST

MDMA CAUSES A SHORT-TERM RELEASE of 5-HT from the neuron. MDMA blocks both the reuptake pump from the synapse into the neuron, and the pump into the synaptic vesicles. It also causes the release of 5-HT from the synaptic vesicles and a release of 5-HT out of the neuron. Because of this action, it tends to flood the synapse with serotonin in the short-term. In the long-term, the 5-HT which is outside of the vesicles can be broken down by metabolic enzymes like MAO, and following treatment with MDMA there will be a downswing in the availability of 5-HT. That's why tryptophan-containing foods like milk and bananas are a good idea after MDMA in order to help to replenish 5-HT.

The McCann-Ricaurte study actually wasn't looking at 5-HT levels, but the binding of a radioactive tracer chemical to the 5-HT reuptake sites in the brain. If, as the authors would like to theorize, there is a narrowly defined range of number of 5-HT reuptake sites per neuron, then a reduction in 5-HT reuptake sites should correspond to a reduction in 5-HT neurons. Unfortunately, they entirely ignored the research showing that proven non-neurotoxic drugs like SSRIs, imipramine and tianeptine (a serotonin-specific reuptake stimulant drug) all cause decreases in 5-HT reuptake densities and in gene expression of 5-HT reuptake pump mRNA — suggesting that there are regulatory mechanisms operating at the gene level. Therefore, one pretty much expects that MDMA would similarly cause regulation of 5-HT sites in the absence of any neurotoxicity, and pretty much eliminates this whole approach to assessing MDMA neurotoxicity as being flawed.

Furthermore, the study found that the highest dosing MDMA users still had 5-HT transporter levels that were the same as the low end of the control non-MDMA using subjects. The fact that there were control

subjects with 5-HT transporter levels which were as low as the MDMA subjects suggests that there might be selection effects at work — particularly as these were subjects that had taken some 200+ doses of MDMA at an average dose of over 300mg at a time. It's possible that low transporter levels lead to this pattern of MDMA use and not the other way around.

Other studies have shown that MDMA users have lower levels of 5-HIAA, which is a 5-HT metabolite (and low levels of 5-HIAA and 5-HT have been correlated in monkeys). However, this ignores evidence in monkeys that MDMA can cause transient and substantial decreases in 5-HT and 5-HIAA in the absence of any decreases in binding to the 5-HT transporter (and hence, in the absence of any neurotoxicity). Furthermore, the effect on MDMA users' sleep and psychology has been shown to be generally the opposite of what one would expect as a result of lesioning the 5-HT system. Of course the fact that a statistically significant effect was found to occur in the sleep of MDMA users (and one which probably increased sleep quality overall, nothing which could be interpreted as damage) was claimed to be evidence of possible "damage" by the study's authors — never mind that the results were 180 degrees away from what was predicted.

I think that MDMA definitely knocks your serotonin system around and therefore it's not a good idea to do it a lot. Personally, I feel after-effects for about a week. This is not, however, evidence of neurotoxicity. Similar after-effects have been described for cocaine, which is neurochemically very similar to MDMA, only it preferentially does to dopamine neurons what MDMA preferentially does to serotonin neurons (although there's overlap and effects of MDMA on dopamine, and effects of cocaine on serotonin). Cocaine is also not a neurotoxin.

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Meeting Notes from the Front: Mounting The Psychedelic PR Campaign

from the renegade files of Scotto

I WAS DOING A LOT OF FREELANCE CONSULTING in those days, offering my particular brand of so-called "insight" to whoever was paying the most. I'd spent most of my career working for high-powered entertainment conglomerates, getting their stupid clients out of trouble, finding ever more creative ways to publicize and promote movies that offered absolutely no value to the human race, and feeling pretty good about the fat paychecks I promptly wasted on horrible weekends full of taxing debauchery. So imagine my surprise when an InfiniTek representative called me out of the blue, requesting I fly to London and meet with its Board of Directors for a project that would ultimately "change my life".

InfiniTek was at the time the leading global pharmaceuticals conglomerate. By that time, the summer of 2004, the pharmaceuticals industry was in a deep recession. No new diseases had come along in at least eight months, and all the old ones were well in hand. It had become extremely apparent to InfiniTek's upper management that a change would have to take place in the political climate of the world if profit margins were to return to previous heights and if growth was to return to previous astonishing rates. It was no longer enough to be the leading supplier of every kind of medicinal pharmaceutical you could imagine; no, it was now obvious that so-called "recreational pharmaceuticals" were the key to answering all of the company's serious cash flow problems. But how to get around the ridiculous War on Drugs still being waged by the United States government? How to circumvent the absurd propaganda machine that the United States had set in motion decades earlier?

"What we need," said InfiniTek's chairman of the board, [name

deleted for security reasons], "is a counter-campaign, a public relations campaign that will target the next generation of recreational pharmaceutical users and open the ballgame wide up for competitive, aggressive marketing of psychedelic substances to the world. Mind you, I have no interest in the 'hard' drugs; no one wants to compete with the CIA that directly, after all. But the fact remains: it's time to open the floodgates, introduce significant and powerful alternatives to the goddamn monopoly that alcohol has on the public consciousness. There are other ways to alter human consciousness for fun and profit, dammit, and InfiniTek needs to be at the forefront!"

My mind was racing. Of all the seedy, disgusting things someone had ever paid me to do, this was among the worst—and that included my work to convince the entire population of China that *Melrose Place* had deep religious significance, and should be revered alongside the words of Confucius.

"Well," I said slowly, ideas forming more rapidly than my sickened stomach could manage, "it's obvious we need to target the children."

[name deleted for security reasons]'s eyebrow shot up.

"I'm listening," he said.

"It's simple, really," I replied. "You've got the resources, the undeserved respect, and the marketing clout to wield an iron fist wherever you want to. So: it's time to develop your own line of toys, gentlemen. It's time to start advertising those toys on Saturday morning cartoon programming. You'll make these toys more desirable than the Cabbage Patch Kid fad, the Beanie Baby fad, even the recent Cuddly Parasites of the Amazon fad. Soon every child in America will want these toys, and their parents will be powerless to

resist. With your toys in the hands of the American populace, no politician will dare resist their influence as they grow to voting age and demand that psychedelic substances be legalized."

"What kind of toys are you thinking of here?" asked InfiniTek CEO Alexander Strip.

"Action figures," I replied. "Psychedelic substance action figures. Let's take the War on Drugs to the next level, except we'll cast the psychedelics as cosmic heroes, Team Altered-State, battling an onslaught of evil government menace. Just think of the possibilities. Captain Acid will lead our heroes into battle, with his high-powered Tripmobile and his devastating Self-Recursion Lasso. The mighty Doctor DMT will stun his enemies with the Tremendum Torpedo, and his sidekick Elfy the Entity will provide much needed comic relief. The Mysterious Mescalito will give us access to niche ethnic markets. The beautiful Princess Ecstasy will add that much needed feminine touch to the team. Let's not forget the relentless Mister Mushroom, either, with his remarkable Swivel-Arm Battle Spores, or the ever intriguing Agent K, whose prowess with far eastern 'throwing syringes' will send his foes hurtling into the K-hole at a moment's notice. Their enigmatic commander, Heroic Dose, will send them on mission after mission, to win the War on Drugs once and for all."

"Good Lord," said [name deleted for security reasons]. "I think you've got something here."

"The fight will not be easy, of course. Team Altered-State will have their work cut out for them against the vicious Drug Eradication Association, led by the maniacal General Bummer Trip and his fearsome Forfeiture Flamethrower."

"Of course, of course," muttered Alexander Strip.

"You could sell entire playsets. The Team Altered-State command headquarters, Code Name: Ground Control. The Team Altered-State chemical supply dump, Code Name: Pillbrook. The Team Altered-State r&R joint, Code Name: Tryptamine Tavern. The DEA will of course have its own hovercraft, the Schedule One. Build brand awareness, turn it into the Team Altered-State half-hour cartoon, start releasing Team Altered-State feature films... eventually each playset will come with its own little vial full of Strange White Powder, and your revenues will go through the roof."

It was a bold and brassy plan, coming at just the right time, a time when boredom was the primary motivator for most human beings in the western world. InfiniTek unleashed the full power of its immensely savvy marketing arm, and within fifteen years, the War on Drugs in the United States collapsed. Within a year after that, InfiniTek itself was worth more than the total gross national products of every nation on Earth combined, and its executives were widely said to be laughing their way all the way to the bank, and then to the lab, to pick up their own little vials full of Strange White Powder. It was a weird weird situation, and consensus reality was pushed to its limits.

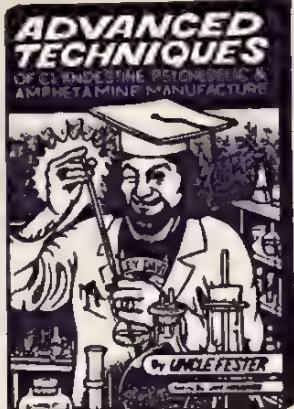
I, of course, collected a big fat paycheck and moved to a small Caribbean island with not vials but full fledged vats of Strange White Powder. My little corner of the planet has not been the same since, I can tell you that for nothing. [~]

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The Dharma of Ibogaine

an interview with Eric Taub, by James Kent

For nine years Eric Taub has been finding creative ways to treat patients and addicts with a powerful psychedelic substance known as ibogaine. Originally found in the West-African shrub *Tanemanthe iboga*, ibogaine takes its users on a deep voyage through the psyche and beyond – usually lasting up to twenty hours. Ibogaine has also been known to successfully interrupt the painful symptoms associated with heroin addiction withdrawal. All of these properties make ibogaine a very promising substance for use in clinical settings, though it is still illegal to use in the United States.

JAMES KENT: Well I think we should probably just start at the beginning. I thought it would be good to start out asking about how and when you were first introduced to ibogaine?

ERIC TAUB: I received a phone call from a friend who at the time was an alcoholic and chain-smoked Camels. He had heard that there were a couple of doctors from Holland on their way to Washington to see if they could push the legalization of ibogaine through the FDA really quickly.

That was nine years ago this November. It was during a time when I had completed about my 20th year of making rings. It was a simple line of rings, and I was really looking for something that I could do as an end in itself, and not so much a mean to an end. Although I liked doing shows and it was an easy living, semi-retired from month to month, I really wanted to do something that I loved, something that I could call my dharma.

When I heard about ibogaine, I was initially amazed that something existed that could eliminate craving from substances like methadone, alcohol, and nicotine after one single session without the person having to go through the agony of withdrawal, and it wasn't available. So my first intention was to go to Africa and pick up 50k doses and go to Needle Park in Europe and dose out people coming for their free works. Then I would call CNN and when only a quarter of the people showed up the following week, that would be the fulfillment of my messianic complex. (Laughs)

I had no idea when I went to Africa that it would initially cost \$1000 a gram.

Where in Africa did you go?

I went to Gabon. And when I arrived I literally knocked on the right doors. I went to a university, and indirectly got connected with a chemist who already had been working with the extraction process. There was just a series of synchronistic events that literally enabled me to walk through, so that ten days later I was flying back to a Caribbean country with 13 or 16 grams of ibogaine.

So you never went out to the bush?

Never went to the bush. It wasn't until my third and fourth trip that I visited the areas where t. iboga grows with the chemist that was doing the extraction work.

Did the chemist just give you 16 grams or was there some kind of agreement?

Yeah, he fronted me a good portion of it and I gave him the few thousand dollars I had in my pocket, and we worked out an arrangement where I would pay him contingent on receiving more. As a result of that, I had to charge a significant amount, whereas now, given the supply and price, I have a much larger sliding scale.

How much is an active dose?

It depends on body weight, and on addiction, and the type of initiatory psycho-spiritual experience one wants, but the range is quite large, from 6.5 mg per kg of body weight to 25 mg to overwhelm a methadone or heroin habit.



So you are talking about many grams for a single dose.

Well, with body weight, we're talking about approximately .5 g to 2 g for addicts, and about .5 g to a gram for an initiatory experience. Women need less because they are more open, so they don't need to take as much to have an initiatory experience or to free themselves of a cocaine habit. Cocaine doesn't require the overwhelming physical withdrawal. It's just addressing mental craving, which this does as well because there is a metabolite which is introduced when the ibogaine interacts with the biochemistry in the brain, and receptors are filled up which have to do with craving in addicts. But it also fills the receptors of non-addicts too, which I believe has to do with our ability to move into a less reactive state when dealing with certain kinds of patterns, habitual patterns of relationships, etc.

There is a biochemist I introduced the molecule to, and he said he fell in love with it, and he compared it to ayahuasca except that there is an extra added component, an extra facet to the diamond, to ibogaine, which I believe is that component which enables people to retain the information they receive from the experience. They are continually maintaining their identification with the witness or with the adult that is reliving the unleashing of repressed memories or this onslaught of pictorial gestalts and these archetypal vignettes that emerge during the 20 to 30 hours of experiencing a session with ibogaine.

A third component, a metabolite, is then introduced into the system, which washes out over a period of weeks and months. With other psychoactives it seems the experience is over when the psychoactive is thrown out of the system. With ibogaine, the ibogaine itself is thrown out of the system faster than an aspirin, but it lingers and creates these windows, three days, ten days, three months. Very often I receive calls from people months later telling me, "I finally got it, I finally understand what that was about, because I've been experiencing more insight as a result of that restructuring of definition of who I thought I was, and now all my intentions that I came into the experience with have been worked through and resolved, and I'm considering doing it again maybe six months from now."

I've even talked with people who have done many psychoactives and have been very skeptical that anything can linger and create process over a period of weeks and months who are emphatic about the fact that that was the case with their experience over the continuing months after taking ibogaine.

So you had to fly back to the Caribbean because you couldn't bring the stuff into the United States?

No, it's a felony. It's still a class one drug here. I had to do sessions literally in international waters, in the Caribbean.

How many sessions did you do in the Caribbean?

When I was down there initially, I didn't do any. I just dropped the material off. The day that I arrived back home a psychotherapist friend of mine had a chapter from an out of print book called *The Healing Journey* by Claudio Naranjo, a Chilean therapist, dropped in her lap by a client. The book had a chapter called "Ibogaine:

Fantasy and Reality." She hadn't mentioned that she had a friend that was beginning to do any kind of work with this - it was just one of the many synchronistic events that facilitated us beginning to experiment with the dose range.

Initially we used Claudio Naranjo's very low therapeutic dose range, and we began to experiment with people interested in going to the Caribbean to do therapeutic sessions. These were directive therapeutic sessions specifically aimed to access repressed memories from childhood. Then we began to experiment with slightly higher doses until we realized that at about the 8-12 mg per kg stage, we could do away with the directive session, and not only have a person access those types of therapeutic insights, but also have a full-fledged initiatory experience where they would be surrendering to the essence energy of the plant.

How much were you initially charging for your sessions?

Initially I was charging \$3.21 per milligram which comes out to about \$2500 for a 165 pound person. Lately, I've been able to charge \$2.14 per mg. But if a person can't afford that, I have a place to go which is lower. I can go down to \$1.50 per mg, which is less than half of what it was initially. And if a person really can't afford it and they're knocking on the door hard enough, whether it be for an initiatory or an addiction interruption, we'll do them for whatever they can afford, or nothing. We do hope and anticipate that there are people who can afford to pay the full price or even more, so that we can create a sliding scale for the addicts who can't afford it, because most addicts can't.

Over the past seven or eight years, how many sessions have you actually done?

Since March the 8th 1992, we've done somewhere around 175 people; half have been addicts, and half have been initiatory.

Of the treatments that you did on the addicts, how many of them were successfully interrupted?

I consider all of them to be successful. But when you are talking linearly, in terms of how many of them have eliminated their addiction to their substance of choice, I would say that after the first single session 30% of those in their 40s and 50s and 70% of those in their 20s and 30s went back to their drug of choice. The reason for that is because usually if a person is older, they have lost more and they have reached a certain significant level of rock bottom, where they can take advantage of this. They've lost family, kids, homes, jobs, health, and they don't have the world by the balls anymore, so they take this really seriously. And they're fed up with their addiction.

Whereas people in their 20s and 30s are still playing, exploring. They haven't lost very much yet, so they usually are really influenced by the experience but very often don't do the aftercare work that is absolutely essential for a person to take advantage of the process. There's a couple month period after a person does ibogaine, where they're very open, vulnerable, and susceptible to receiving a lot of information about themselves and why they became addicted personalities. Unless they create the aftercare group and/or

individual work and actually make headway into their own process, they are going to wake up one morning and the craving is going to come back.

But if they've done the work over the period of a couple of months, then by the time the metabolite washes out of their receptors, they've behaviorally changed themselves profoundly enough so that it's okay that the metabolite washes out. They've already made the changes within, and the craving doesn't come back.

Now did you yourself have a history of addiction, or was it just a condition that you thought needed to be addressed and you were going to be the guy to do it?

It was the latter, and that's one of the reasons that I don't conduct the addiction interruption sessions. Although I did the first several, and became somewhat acclimated to working with people who were addicts, to the point where they were appreciating the facilitation, I never really felt comfortable doing them. I leave that up to people who have a proclivity for that kind of work... ex-addicts, and people that have a calling to work with addicts. I have a lot of sympathetic professionals, psychiatrists and doctors, really throughout the world now, that are conducting the addiction interruption sessions. And I tend to facilitate the initiatory sessions.

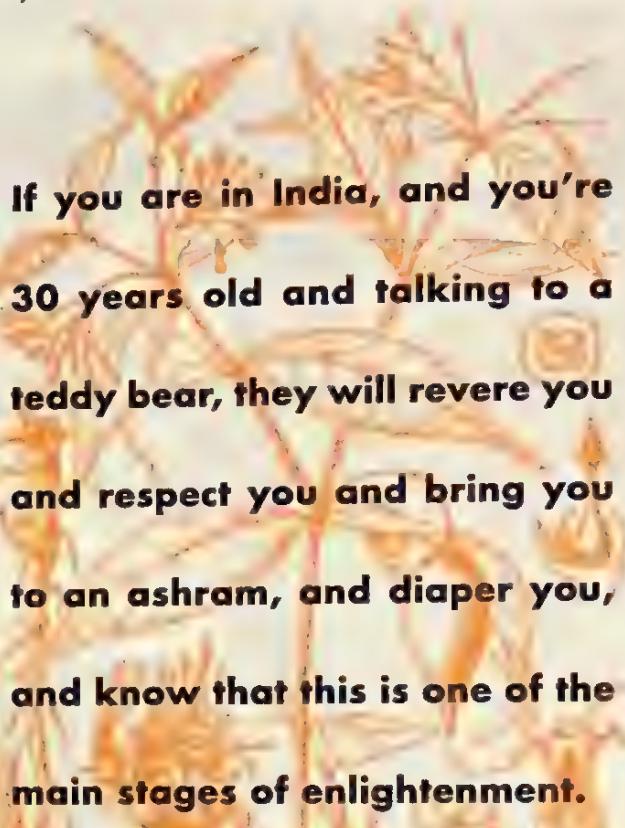
When you are facilitating a 20-30 hour session, isn't that fairly taxing on you?

Well, it's taxing on one level. On a psychic level it's taxing, but it's very restful on other levels because there is very little that one has to do as a facilitator. I don't intervene in any kind of therapeutic sense. I just help people meander to the bathroom, and help them sip some water, and I'm really there for the before period of time and the after period of time when we are docking. We take strolls on the beach when they are beginning to want to share their experience and how it relates to the patterns in their life. But the process itself is so internal that I only spend the first five or six hours in a one-on-one and then the person is very comfortable about me leaving for an hour. I come back and check, and then I leave again. I'm close at hand throughout the entire evening, but basically the person is on their own and feeling very comfortable, very protected, and very absorbed in their own process for the first 20-30 hours, so it's a very easy process to facilitate.

Have you ever had any freakouts, or any struggling with the process that was really hard to contain?

No. Not in the case of doing a session with ibogaine. There was one person early on in our experimentation, he was a therapist, and he never told us that he had had psychotic breaks when he had done psychoactives in the past. He's a therapist that befriended all of us, and took an actually very small amount, and ended up kind of merging with his ten year old self which was very disconcerting for all of us. He became like a child. We spoke with his psychiatrist who said that he had retrieved him from a couple of psychotic breaks and suicidal attempts. This man thought he could go in and access some good information, and not even tell his wife or any of us about his history.

What we realized from that experience was that there are certain psychiatric criteria that we need to adhere to in order to allow this process to take place in the western hemisphere. Because if you are in India, and you're 30 years old and talking to a teddy bear, they will revere you and respect you and bring you to an ashram, and diaper you, and know that this is one of the main stages towards enlightenment. They won't Thorazine you and try to make you functional; they will just let you go through this process, this natural process of social ego loss. But in the west they don't respect this, they don't understand this, there aren't any emergency centers



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main stages of enlightenment.**

Tabernathia iboga

like ashrams, or very few, where a person would have a context for this experience.

This, plus the fact that what we're doing is so controversial, made us decide that we have to be very careful and people need to adhere to certain psychiatric criteria. That happened very early on, thank goodness, and that was the only time that ever happened, because after that, I would screen people carefully and ask them specific questions about their previous experience with psychoactives and a few other important concerns.

Have you ever had anybody in a session who you gave what you considered to be a high dose, and they didn't feel anything?

There was one [who didn't feel anything at all], very fascinating. There were also a handful of people who felt very little from a full-

{continued on page 24}



story by Kyra Edeker
photos by K. Johansen and Abrupt

BURNING MAN

experiments in the primal dreamscape

The Black Rock playa is a barren valley of dry alkali clay kept in by black-brown mountains rising from the flats. There is not a blade of grass, cactus or bug on it. A ceiling of high desert sky, four walls of granite and sandstone and one seemingly eternal white floor on which to roam form the primal dreamscape for the human mind to paint its weird whims and visions. In moonlight, it becomes an unending blue expanse of physically traversible mind. Here is where Burning Man plants its funky road signs and plops its collective ass to dream for a week.

Burning Man is an attempt to manifest an autonomous, artistic community. Larry Harvey, founder and co-coordinator of Burning Man, has said, "Burning Man is a laboratory, an experiment, not a utopia." Most citizens of Black Rock City, the name of the town that rises for the week, agree with this broad statement of Harvey's. But that is where the common definitions end and the dreamscape begins.

One of the many experiments taking place at Burning Man is the creation of a self-defined community where people are responsible for themselves. This includes bringing all of the food, water, shade and shelter they need to survive in the desert for a week. For the most part, the experiment has proved successful: individuals take responsibility for what they do and what goes on around them. Those that misstep have a

community around them that can respond in a healthy manner.

This self-reliance is considered mandatory by the organizers and arrives piece by piece with each person who wishes to sustain the community. The city materializes for a week to welcome the uprooted freaks and artists of the world. Much of the youngest generations of America are a sub-nation of slow transients. Ask around and most Black Rock citizens will report they came from A, live in B and are moving to C... and after that, who knows? They live, for the most part, outside of their blood-family and occasionally outside of the law. This feeling of constant motion and non-committance to the physical community in which they live leads to a sprawling tribe of 'homeless' that must make their home where they feel it—even if they can't live there. But on a dreamscape that provides no definitions and few boundaries, 'home' can have very different meanings.

One of the simultaneous strengths and weaknesses of Burning Man is the lack of meaning given to the gathering and to the icon of the Man himself. Harvey has made clear that the wooden statue he created in 1986 and helps rebuild every year means whatever the individual viewer projects onto it. By not stating a specific mission, campers can arrive thinking it is a gathering of neo-pagans set for the



At Burning Man there is no controlling what you may run into unless you hide in your tent. Even then something may come looking for you ...

sacrifice, a new kind of Rainbow Gathering, or another set of hardcore desert ravers. There are times when these views are not reconciled and the town ends up with situations like the ghetto of goa-ravers on "the loud end of camp" who are "ruining the mood" for others. At its best, the divergent ideas of "what is Burning Man" meld into an unreal society of acceptance and outrageous oddity. Artists, whether self-proclaimed or not, define their little pockets of reality.

The collective dream contains niches of play with giant swings for adults, round critters made of dry palm leaves with tall black and white hats that bounce around and communicate by rattling their costumes, and a pen for "free range pinatas" (where pinatas are allowed to roam free without fear of being bashed in for their secret stash of candy). Dreams of play mix with dreams of sensuality and sex that live nightly at Bianca's Smut Shack and go up in flame at the Temple of Rudra, an opera performed with writhing flesh and fire on Saturday night. These visions intermingle with the ethereal and dark. The Very Large Array knocks playa-travellers into slow motion introspection with its sound garden of looping music and noises in the dark. Then you might wander to a post-apocalyptic boat shipwrecked on the desert floor, made out of

burnt out pianos and television sets. Wandering back to your camp, you may witness someone being well-whipped while tied to a crucifix at the Temple of Atonement. All of these micro-realities live down the block from each other and there is no controlling what you may run into unless you hide in your tent. Even then something may come looking for you.

This dreamscape becomes completely detached from everyday reality when you add drugs to the mix. While the Burning Man organizers don't enthusiastically encourage drug use in their public communications (the survival guide recommends instead a "creative response" to the elements of the city), it appears expected that a large number of attendees will be tripping or altered at some point during the festivities. In this year's Black Rock Gazette, one of the daily newspapers, there was a list of drugs, how easily accessible they were deemed to be and how well they melded with the surrounding environment. People travel hundreds, if not thousands, of miles to one of the harshest environments on the continent and then proceed to pile psychedelics and other drugs on top of the intense physical experience. This is both

absolutely ridiculous and absolutely rational. The terrain is so familiar, yet so alien, many find it hard to resist tripping within what already feels like a place that only exists in your head. The sensation of being physically immersed in a

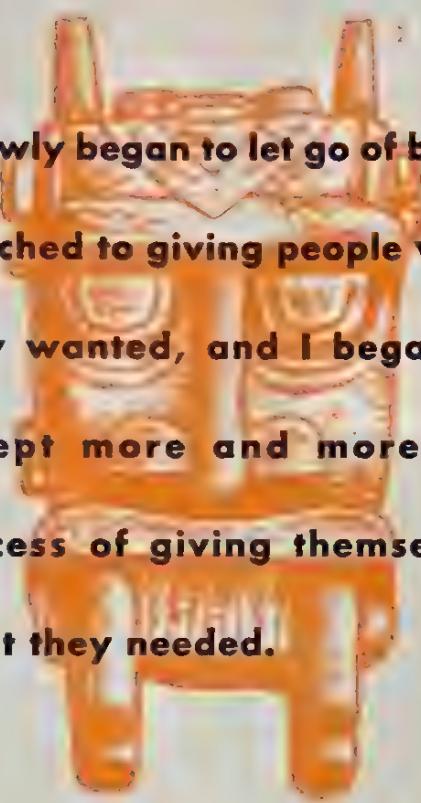
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fledged dose. But I even see the ingenuity of the plant facilitating the experience for this type of individual. People get just what they need, and it's just an amazingly uncanny ability for this plant, and I'm sure for others as well, to facilitate giving people exactly what they need.

One particular woman comes to mind. This is a woman who, since she was a young girl, knew exactly what she wanted to do. And she did everything she always wanted to do. She said that she did not wake up frustrated or unhappy any morning in her life in the past twenty years, except after she took ibogaine, because she was expecting to be booked up with all these pictures and insights. And she was lying around in bed for 30 hours, and absolutely nothing happened. No pictures, no insights, no visuals.

She woke up the next morning frustrated because in the west,



I slowly began to let go of being attached to giving people what they wanted, and I began to accept more and more the process of giving themselves what they needed.

especially in the New Age community, there is no notion or understanding of a very significant part of what I would consider the spiritual equation. There are two legs: one is creating a healthy sense of self, or ego, and another is offering it up, or surrendering it. And you gotta do one before you can do the other. But she had done the work, without even knowing it, and she was looking to book herself up with more ways to empower herself, ways to feel a healthy strong sense of self or ego or identification, and nothing happened.

She was so disappointed, and she spent ten more days in Costa Rica with her husband, vacationing, went back, and reported to me that she was utilizing about one third the amount of energy that she

previously used to do her work. She stopped smoking pot, which she was smoking every single day, and she kicked into this state of unity consciousness for eleven months, day and night. She was just in this flow that she had never come close to experiencing before except for very brief moments.

And so I began to understand that contextually, it did not make a difference whatsoever what a person experienced; whether it was sixteen hours of visions that someone transcribed to me in the form of thirty-four single-spaced typewritten pages, or absolutely nothing. Behaviorally, they were able to change patterns, and change their relationships with certain patterns, and within their lives afterwards. So I slowly began to let go of being attached to giving people what they wanted, and I began to accept more and more the process of them giving themselves what they needed.

So even though she didn't have the experience that she expected and wanted, it was very transformative, and essentially what she needed in life even though she didn't know that's what she needed.

Exactly. I realized after doing a lot of sessions that there are layers in the onion. For example, when I would do an obsessive/compulsive person, they would get more deeply in touch with their depression. If I did a person that was depressed, they would get more deeply in touch with their anger, which depression masks. If they were angry, they would get in touch with their sadness. From sadness, people would get in touch with joy. When people would come in that were perfectly functional and happy people, they'd get in touch with a deeper level of emptiness. And if a person went in with a sense of emptiness, they would get in touch with an experience of enlightenment.

Have you ever had clients who came in that you knew right away were recreational thrill-seekers just looking for a new high?

I've had two of those people. And their experience was quite insignificant. They didn't have any kind of interesting reaction because it needs to be a pilgrimage.

Have you heard of any deaths or medical emergencies resulting from ibogaine use?

I've heard of a couple in Europe that were well documented, but there seems to be a connection with heroin. They either bolted out of, or had on them, some heroin which they took during the process of their ibogaine experience. Ibogaine potentiates heroin, and so they're not to be taken together. Those were the only deaths that I heard about.

So these were not accidental overdoses, they were user error.

That's how it was documented in the literature. Both in Switzerland and in the Netherlands I believe.

When I talked to you previously, you mentioned that you were looking for a host country to help set up an institute. How is that process going for you?

It's a process all right. We do have ongoing interest in Costa Rica from the health department, and there are dozens of pages of

literature being translated to be presented to them. We haven't had any kind of steps back, but the steps forward in creating a center where we can do this above ground have just been very slow. The sooner the better.

How many times have you personally tried ibogaine?

I did two small doses back when we were doing small doses, then I did a couple of the midrange, and the last time I did it was over two years ago. I haven't done it for a couple years, and I'm gearing up to do it again fairly soon.

What were your personal reactions?

Very uniquely different from session to session. It was like a different person experiencing it every time, because my intentions were very different. Initially I went into it wanting to explore issues around my mother. I also explored father issues, very specifically rekindling memories that defined my relationship with my father and how that relates to my relationship with the world. Immediately after that the project began to change and expand. As I began to let go of certain ways of defining myself through my relationship with my dad, the project began to change.

The second experience was with my mom, and my relationships with women, and with myself, began to change after that. I think the relationship with the mother defines how you feel about yourself, and the relationship with the father defines your relationship with other people, money, projects.

The third and fourth experiences were very different. They were initiatory experiences in which I was introduced to the essence energy of the plant. During one of the experiences, I was in a transcendental state for three and a half hours where there was no thinking, only a sense of "isness." It was similar to a transcendental state that I accessed in my twenties when I would spend six to fourteen hours a day for months and months in meditation.

So these medium doses that you said you took, was there any dialogue going on between you and the plant?

There is for a lot of people, but not for me. It was more an overwhelming sense of its presence, its incredible power, and its incredibly benign qualities as well. It had a very visceral masculine sense, and an incredibly benign beauty in terms of the plant's availability and willingness to not confront head-on when one didn't want to explore a particular thing any further.

So it was not aggressively in your face.

Not at all, but it was so powerful - very interesting.

How long has iboga been used traditionally?

Anthropologists and paleontologists have told me the beginning of human evolution took place in the Rift Valley, eastern Zaire. This is where iboga originates from, so some people think it's one of the original derivatives of the tree of life. Whether that's true or not, who knows, but the people who brought it out of that area are one of the happiest people, living like upper Paleolithic hunter/gatherers.

The Buiti?

No, the Buiti received it from these people 300 years ago. I'm talking about pygmies who lived in the Rift Valley 20,000 years ago. They still see life like a knife through water. They have no history, no past, no future, they still have that symbiotic relationship with the earth, whereas the Buiti and other tribes have created a religion out of it. I don't agree when people call it the Buiti god, because it's not the Buiti god. The Buiti are new at this, it's only been 300 years. They created a religion out of it, the way every culture creates its own religion out of whatever, putting it up on a pedestal and abdicating their own sense of responsibility.

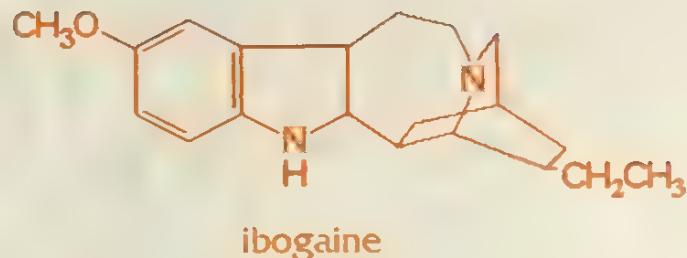
You've been following this path for nine years now. Has it been fulfilling?

It has been wonderfully fulfilling.

Are you planning to do this for the rest of your days?

Well, I just know that it is today. I mean, I have no idea what's up for tomorrow. I go from hour to hour. I don't think in terms of any goals, usually, and I'm better off not. I just do what's in front of me to do. Very often I don't know what I'm going to do when I wake up. But I feel like I'm running alongside of an energy, or an entity that has energy of its own. And I'm just thankful to be taking care of it for as long I'm involved. I have less and less vested interest in it, in terms of thinking that it's just my project.

For more info: <http://www.ibeginagain.com>

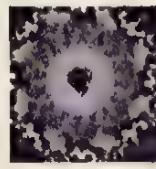


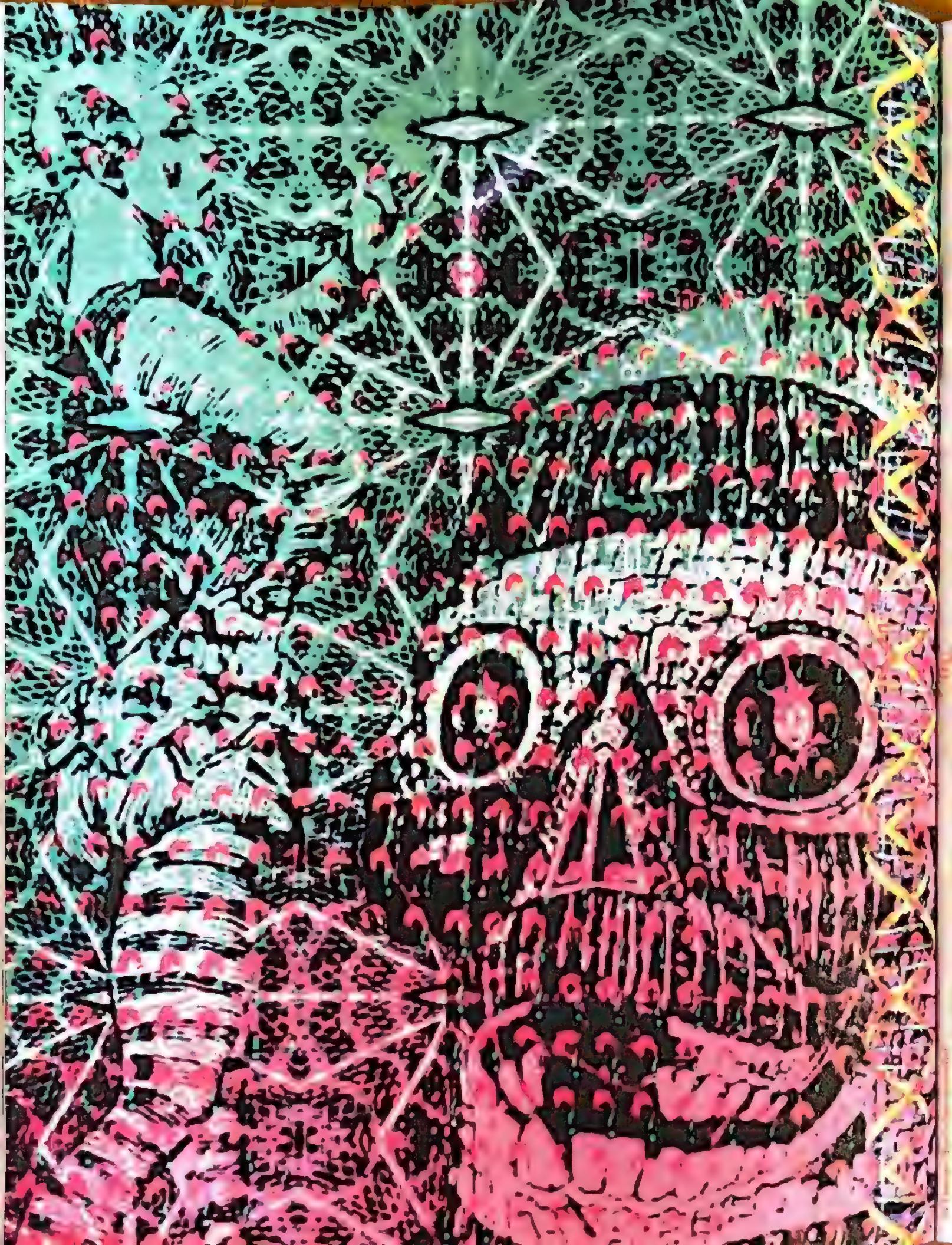
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RICK
Strassman

Interview by Scotto and James Kent

From 1990 to 1995, Rick Strassman, M.D., conducted pioneering, federally approved DMT trials in human subjects. Strassman was born and raised in southern California, graduating from Stanford University in 1973, and Yeshiva University's Albert Einstein College of Medicine in 1977. He completed his internship and psychiatric residency at UC Davis (Sacramento) in 1981. Dr. Strassman spent a year at UC San Diego in a clinical psychopharmacology research fellowship, and two years of post-fellowship training at the University of New Mexico. At UNM, he attained the rank of tenured Associate Professor of Psychiatry. Currently, he is Clinical Associate Professor of Psychiatry at the University of British Columbia, and is consulting psychiatrist at Jefferson Mental Health Services in Port Townsend, WA.

TRP: What led you to study DMT in particular?

RS: Several factors drew me to study DMT. It is much less well known than the other major psychedelics, such as LSD, psilocybin, and mescaline. The notoriety of those other drugs, and the media and political attention that might result from those drugs being given to people, worried me. I wanted to do this work quietly, with as little attention as I could manage. Also, I thought there would be less resistance on the part of the regulatory agencies in terms of their approving a study of a "minor," "obscure" drug, as opposed to a drug with a more glaring reputation.

DMT is formed and found in the human body. In the 1950's to 1970's, it was proposed as a potential cause for naturally occurring psychotic states such as schizophrenia and manic depressive illness. In formulating my projects, I drew upon this older literature, and reframed it in the context of the current vast explosion of information regarding serotonin. Serotonin is important because it happens to be the primary neurotransmitter whose receptors are affected by DMT and other hallucinogens. Interestingly, many of the newer, safer, and more effective antipsychotic drugs block the effects of serotonin. I proposed that if we understood how DMT worked from the viewpoint of serotonin, we might unlock some of the mysteries of, and develop newer treatments for, such disabling disorders as schizophrenia.

Of course, other naturally occurring highly altered states of consciousness might be mediated by DMT: near-death experiences, and mystical states, for example. So, I thought that understanding how DMT worked in people might deepen our appreciation of other states of consciousness.

DMT is short acting. I knew that the clinical research environment of a busy academic hospital would really stress our volunteers. I also wanted to give big doses, which might increase the risk of acute adverse reactions. Thus, I wanted a drug that was in and out fast. I hoped that no matter how bad someone's trip might be, at least it would be over quickly. I thought we could manage a 20 minute bummer, but a 6 1/2 hour one might tax our resources, especially as we were just beginning this work, and we didn't want to jeopardize our volunteers or our research project's chances of success.

Terence McKenna and I were just getting to know each other at the time. I was positioning myself to study psychedelics, and he extolled, or rather regaled me with, the virtues of DMT in no uncertain terms. I acknowledge and appreciate his influence in this area. DMT provides glimpses into absolutely unbelievable territory. At the same time, the sense of certainty and reality of what is glimpsed is so profound as to be undeniable. Perhaps it is the lack of time to prepare, build up to, or resist the effects. Maybe it's due to some unique chemical properties of DMT. Whatever the cause, DMT seemed like the best, most intense, most clear-cut psychedelic there was. What better drug to study?

TRP: When and where did your research actually take place?

RS: Approval for our DMT study was obtained from the United States Food and Drug Administration on November 5, 1990. We gave our first dose of DMT, 1.0 mg/kg intramuscularly (IM), later that month. All other doses were intravenous (IV), as the IM route was too slow. Also, more drug was required IM to give the same peak effect as seen

with IV, and we wanted to conserve our supply of DMT. I moved to Victoria, British Columbia in April 1995, and tried commuting for awhile between Victoria and Albuquerque. After two trips to New Mexico, I decided this wouldn't work, and we gave our last doses of DMT in July 1995.

Nearly every administration of DMT took place on the fifth floor of the University of New Mexico Hospital in Albuquerque. On the east wing of this floor is the General Clinical Research Center, or GCRC. The few DMT administrations that occurred elsewhere were in the magnetic resonance imaging laboratory across campus. This was for a study looking at brain function changes while under the influence of DMT.

The first two years' worth of DMT research took place in whatever room was free the particular day of the study. For the second two years' of research we had our own room that was nicely

In some ways, this was the most hellish space imaginable for giving high dose DMT trips.

painted and furnished, to give it a homier feel. However, there still were oxygen tubes and suction hoses coming out of the wall behind the bed. In addition, the GCRC was the site of some high dose cancer chemotherapy research, so we had some pretty sick people on the ward at the same time. Also, if other medical or surgical wards were full, the GCRC would take those overflow patients and provide nursing care until beds were available on the other wards.

In some ways, this was the most hellish space imaginable for giving high dose DMT trips. However, we were surprised to see how this evolved over time into an almost uniformly positive experience. First, as many people on their high dose of DMT were concerned about dying, or being dead, they were reassured by whatever vague recollection they could muster that they were in a high-tech hospital setting where immediate aid could be offered. Second, the dreary, oppressive, and threatening exterior circumstances volunteers found themselves in did a lot to encourage an introspective, inner-directed experience. It also helped enhance the bond between volunteers and the research team. We seemed like oases of sanity and support compared to the rest of the environment. All of these factors actually combined to strengthen and encourage the letting go attitude so important in getting the full effect of a high dose DMT experience.

TRP: In the course of your research, approximately how many volunteers did you administer DMT to and what dose ranges did you study?

RS: By the time we wrapped up our research in July 1995, we had given 65 volunteers about 400 doses of DMT. These doses ranged from 0.05 to 0.6 mg/kg by the IV route. We gave 1.0 mg/kg IM to one volunteer. We gave 0.6 mg/kg IV to two volunteers but this overdosed them. Our normal dose range was 0.05 to 0.4 mg/kg IV. For the dose response study, we also gave two intermediate doses: 0.1 and 0.2 mg/kg. For the tolerance study, we gave 0.3 mg/kg IV repeatedly. For various pre-treatment studies, combining potentially blocking

or augmenting medications before giving DMT, the dose varied depending on the pre-treatment agent being used, but never was outside our 0.05 to 0.4 mg/kg range.

TRP: Were these seasoned volunteers?

RS: All volunteers were experienced psychedelic users. Some were very experienced; some were not too experienced. Some had smoked DMT before, but most had not. Some were using psychedelics in their current life circumstances; others hadn't taken any for 10 or 20 years. I interviewed all prospective volunteers carefully to assess the level of their prior psychedelic experience. Even if someone had taken a moderate number of previous trips, but did not seem to have gotten very deep, or had panicked at some point or another in their trips, I was less inclined to take them, and turned some people away for those reasons. For example, one prospective volunteer told me how he always found himself on top of the roof of a tall building at some point in his high dose mushroom trips, and never knew how he got up there.

We enrolled experienced volunteers for three major reasons. First, we wanted people familiar with the terrain, who could give informed consent, and who could provide us with thorough and articulate reports of what they experienced. Second, we thought experienced people would be less likely to panic, having been in tight psychedelic spaces before, and having negotiated their way through. Third was the legal, but necessary, liability issues. We thought that any claims for damages would be less likely sustained if volunteers had taken, or were taking, psychedelics on their own.

TRP: What kind of measurable physiological reactions did you find when you administered DMT?

RS: We measured many physiological variables. These included heart rate and blood pressure. We measured these by using a machine that kept a blood pressure cuff wrapped around the volunteer's arm during the entire session that gave quite a firm squeeze when recording. Many volunteers did not feel even this rather intrusive grip at the first recording point of their high dose sessions which was at the two minute mark. Later on, as they were coming down, most people actually felt the cuff as a reassuring link to the material world, that they had survived, and we were looking after their bodies.

We measured core temperature by means of a rectal thermometer. This might sound bad, and it was, at least somewhat. Only one volunteer flatly refused this. The thermometer was actually a 1/8-inch diameter flexible wire thermistor that was inserted about 4 to 6 inches at least a half-hour before DMT was given. The thermistor was connected to a little recording device attached to the bed rails.

We also checked pupil diameter, at least early on. This was by using a little card with black circles of various diameters printed on the card. I'd ask someone to open their eyes, and I held the card next to their face, comparing their pupil diameter to a circle on the card. I'd see which card circle was closest to the volunteer's pupil diameter and note it in my book. I tried to measure pupil diameter at our earliest data collecting point, two minutes, but someone had bad flashbacks for a night or two of my face emerging in the dark as they were falling asleep. We gave up on this after the first study

as it was too intrusive.

Finally, we drew a lot of blood samples from the arm that didn't have the blood pressure cuff wrapped around it. We used a fairly complicated rig with two little valve mechanisms and several feet of clear plastic tubing that was attached to a saline bag hanging on a pole above the volunteer. This slowly dripped saline into their vein, to keep the vein from clotting for the two hours of blood collecting required. Blood samples were drawn for several pituitary gland hormones, including ACTH (adrenocorticotrophic hormone, which stimulates the adrenal glands to make certain steroid hormones), beta-endorphin (which may mediate euphoria and pain perception), prolactin (prolonged high levels of which mediate milk let-down in women and have an unknown function in men), and growth hormone. We also measured levels of the pineal hormone melatonin. Later, a group at San Diego measured some of our bloods for vasopressin, which is thought to be an affiliative/bonding sort of hormone in addition to its better known role in fluid and electrolyte maintenance. We also had a little IV in the arm that had the blood pressure cuff wrapped around it. This was the access point for me to administer the DMT.

All but one measured variable went up. The higher the dose of DMT, the greater the rise in the biological factor. ACTH and beta-endorphin rose to levels as high as any seen in pharmacological studies using other, non-psychedelic drugs. The rise in vasopressin was greater than any previously noted in the literature. The one variable that did not rise was melatonin. I could get into this if you'd like, but the explanation gets a bit long-winded. Needless to say, this was disappointing, as I had proposed some time back that the pineal was intimately involved in mediating psychedelic (both drug, and non-drug induced) states.

TRP: What was the most profound physiological reaction you ever saw in one of your volunteers?

RS: We saw two people get close to trouble with blood pressure responses to 0.4 mg/kg IV DMT. One fellow had borderline high blood pressure on his screening physical examination. He lost weight, started exercising regularly, had a normal electrocardiogram done, and returned with normal blood pressure. He also did not exclude himself during the low dose DMT session by exceeding our predetermined threshold for blood pressure rise in that condition.

However, he was quite nervous before his high dose the next day, and his blood pressure really shot up by the time we took the first measurement at two minutes. In fact, it went up so high it set off the alarm on the blood pressure machine, an alarm whose existence we never suspected. He was right in the beginning of a DMT flash, being confronted by a large black female warrior with a spear, who was enraged and astonished to find him in her space. She said something like, "WHO THE HELL DO YOU THINK YOU ARE BURSTING IN ON ME LIKE THIS?" when the alarm bells started going off on the blood pressure machine. His eyes popped open, terrified. We tried calming him, but also wanted to get another blood pressure quickly, to see if it was going up or down, as we were concerned about him having a stroke, and whether we needed to call for immediate help. At the same time, we were fiddling with the back of the machine, trying to locate the "off" switch for the alarm. Within a minute, the machine was inflating again, another sky-high

measurement, and the alarm went off again. It was chaos. He was too frightened to close his eyes again, rightfully alarmed at how his body was reacting. Another reading was a little lower, but the alarm still was on, and it rang again. Finally, at about 5 or 6 minutes, his blood pressure was low enough to not trip the alarm. By 10 minutes he was psychologically down enough to process what had happened. He had a stiff neck and a headache, both of which improved with some Tylenol and rest, and he went home in a couple of hours feeling physically well, but pretty shaken. Even though he wanted to participate in future studies, he got no more DMT.

Another fellow had a rather slow heart rate on his initial physical exam, and a minimally abnormal EKG that was felt to reflect the slowness of his rate. He did fine on his low dose of DMT, but the following day, got into some trouble with his high dose.

His heart rate and blood pressure both bottomed out at the two-minute point. It was as if he was about to faint from the shock of what he was undergoing. Subjectively, he was approaching some sort of craft in a very strange deep space environment, but the astonishment was too great. He sat up with a start, looking pale as a sheet. We were worried about his blood pressure and heart rate, and tried to lower the head of the bed to below heart level, and raise his feet above heart level, the "reverse Trendelenburg position," in hopes of keeping him from passing out. He was too restless to lay flat right then, and we didn't know how to position the bed quickly. He was about to throw up. We didn't have an "emesis basin," and I looked around anxiously for something for him to vomit in. All I could think of handing him was a wadded up hospital gown. He looked down at it, at me, and our nurse, and became even more disoriented. He finally lay back down. By then

**She said something like,
"WHO THE HELL DO YOU THINK YOU ARE
BURSTING IN ON ME LIKE THIS?" when the
alarm bells started going off on the
blood pressure machine.**

his blood pressure was starting to climb to barely normal levels. All the moving around probably had gotten these functions a little more activated. Within 10 minutes, his blood pressure and heart rate were back to his normal, but low levels. Although he felt quite strongly about wanting to continue to participate in future sessions, we were too alarmed by his reaction and did not want to take a chance by repeating it.

TRP: What were some of the more interesting DMT experiences reported by the volunteers? Did anyone see hyperspatial elves or cross over into some kind of shadow dimension?

RS: This is the stuff of my book in progress: *The Spirit Molecule*. There were interesting experiences of all kinds, including physical, emotional, mental, and spiritual experiences. There were entities of varied shapes, sizes, intelligence, and messages. There were near-death experiences of dismemberment and re-integration. There was being devoured by spiders, dancing with DNA, and having sex with

alligators. There were angels, machines, and implantations. There were highly personal recollections and healings, simply colorful visions, visions of the future. There were laughing Buddhas, great winged creatures, computer circuits, and cactus beings. There was enlightenment, there was paranoia, there was love, there was despair. There were women, there were men. There were Amazonian natives and porcelain dolls. There was Gumby. There was not very much, there was way too much. There was nothing to remember, there was too much to forget.

It's interesting that in all the various scientific venues I presented our findings, no one asked about what people experienced. Except once: at the Swiss Academy of Medical Science's 50th anniversary of LSD symposium in 1992, where Albert Hofmann was the guest of honor. Robert Forte stood up when I asked for questions at the end of my talk. He asked, "You know, you never talk about what people experience on high doses of DMT." I answered, "That's because no one ever asks."

TRP: What did you find out about physiological tolerance during the tolerance studies?

RS: Tolerance is the phenomenon of decreasing responses to the same dose of the same drug given repeatedly. For example, LSD, psilocybin, and mescaline all show significant tolerance development after 3-4 daily doses: the same dose causes less and less effects every day it's taken.

In one published report, DMT was given intramuscularly twice a day for 5 days and no tolerance developed. It's also quite difficult to induce tolerance to its behavioral effects in non-human animals. The street data on DMT tolerance in people are inconsistent; the whole issue is complicated by technical concerns: problems with repeatedly smoking DMT, the exhaustion that can set in, as well as pipe mechanics, and build-up of DMT in the bowl. To help clarify these issues, we wanted to see, using a short enough interval, if we could induce tolerance to a fully psychedelic dose of DMT.

We gave 0.3 mg/kg every half hour, four times in a morning, in

There were entities of varied shapes, sizes, intelligence, and messages... devoured by spiders, dancing with DNA, and having sex with alligators. There were angels, machines, and implantations.

this study. We saw varying degrees of tolerance to the physiological effects. ACTH, prolactin, cortisol (an adrenal steroid hormone), and heart rate responses decreased with each successive dose. Blood pressure responses did not decrease with successive dosing. Temperature probably hadn't peaked by the time we removed the thermometer; in addition, sweating (a compensatory mechanism) occurred, and this complicated our interpretation of the temperature data.

TRP: What was the emotional tolerance like? Could everyone handle being given DMT once every 30 minutes for 2 hours?

RS: There didn't seem to be much of a decrease in the intensity of the psychological responses to repeated DMT dosing in the clinical interview situation. That is, when I asked a volunteer to compare first, to second, third, and fourth doses, most didn't think there was a drop-off of effects. This clinical impression held up "objectively" using our rating scale, an abbreviated version of which was given after every injection. The only one of the six rating scale scores that even showed a trend, but not a statistically valid one, was our "Volition" score, which was the weakest of all six factors on the scale, and the one that we thought needed the most modification for future studies.

People did much more personal work during the tolerance study than on the single high-dose sessions. We also started using eyeshades on all volunteers, which made these trips even more inner-directed. It seemed that without eyeshades, opening the eyes would detract from the full DMT effect, and sometimes had a disorienting effect.

There was a typical sequence of sessions. First, there was the bracing for the high dose experience. Once people were able to talk easily at about the 10 minute point, we would briefly discuss and get a summary of, the experience. The rating scale would then take about 5-8 more minutes to fill out. We'd discuss the trip again, and what they were hoping/expecting for their next dose. There would be only a few minutes for the volunteer to relax and get ready for the next dose. Usually the second dose was not very different from the first, as there was still a certain amount of holding on and anxiety, and many of the same issues or experiences from the first session would come up again. After the second session, however, fatigue would start setting in.

For many, the third session was the hardest. Volunteers often were mired in the first and second sessions' issues in even a greater way, and sometimes there was despair, depression, and frustration. After this session, many people asked if anyone had dropped out at this point. My answer was always the same, "Not yet, but of course you're free to stop now if you want." No one ever did drop out of the tolerance study. However, most were exhausted, burned out, ready to quit. As it turns out, by the end of the third session, there remained a significant amount of DMT in the blood throughout the resting period; that is, they had never completely cleared the DMT from their system before getting the fourth and final dose.

The fourth session was nearly always the easiest, best, most refreshing and reviving, and full of joy, completion, satisfaction and resolution. The relief and letdown always were palpable in the room after the fourth session was successfully completed.

TRP: Throughout the study, did you or any of the volunteers ever reach a place where you were no longer comfortable with an increase in dose?

RS: We gave two volunteers 0.6 mg/kg IV one morning. That was a busy morning indeed. That day is written up in the Autumn, 1998, MAPS (Multidisciplinary Association for Psychedelic Studies) newsletter. Briefly, both volunteers were delirious and could remember little of their experience. They were disoriented, confused, and restless. Their reports were sketchy, spotty, and mostly incoherent. No amount of prompting could affect better recall.

Dave Nichols, who made the DMT, and I spent a lot of time discussing whether to reduce the high end dose to 0.5 or 0.4 mg/kg. We ended up settling for 0.4 mg/kg. While a handful of people said they could have done more than 0.4 mg/kg, there were just as many who said they would not have participated if the high dose were any more than 0.4 mg/kg. So, I think we chose correctly. In our preliminary work with the tolerance study, we started with hourly intervals, using 0.05 mg/kg. We then tried this low dose at 30 minute intervals. This was to see if there was any sensitization to repeated dosing, which can occur with some drugs, for example, stimulants. That is, the same dose, given repeatedly, causes a greater and greater response, sometimes to the point of toxicity.

We then went to 0.1 mg/kg every hour, and then every half-hour. We then tried 0.2 every hour, then every 30 minutes. 0.3 mg/kg every hour was no problem; every 30 minutes seemed taxing. 0.4 mg/kg every hour was pretty tiring. The second of two volunteers at 0.4 mg/kg every half-hour asked us to stop after the third dose. She was exhausted, weakened, overwhelmed and unwilling to take any more. So, we settled on 0.3 mg/kg every 30 minutes. Again, we seemed to have chosen right, as I don't think we could have gotten any better results than we did using 0.3 mg/kg, and some people might have dropped out with a higher dose.

In our pre-treatment, combination drug studies, we also did a fair amount of pilot work. We first decided upon the effective blocking or augmenting dose of the pre-treatment agent, based on literature reviews in which it was used in combination with other serotonin-active drugs. We then began with 0.05 mg/kg IV DMT to make sure we weren't about to see any huge multiplying effect of the pre-treatment agent.

With one particular agent, 0.1 mg/kg of DMT seemed to be multiplied into a 0.2 or 0.3 mg/kg dose, both psychologically and in terms of blood pressure and heart rate. We gave one fellow 0.2 mg/kg without, and then with, the pre-treatment drug, and he said it was as much as, or more than, a 0.4 mg/kg dose. Later that morning, another fellow lost consciousness briefly at 0.2 mg/kg in combination with the pre-treatment drug. We ended up using 0.1 mg/kg DMT for this particular pre-treatment drug study. I am not naming this pre-treatment drug, because I'm reluctant for people to try the combination at home; the additive blood pressure effects might be dangerous, as might be the enhancement of the psychedelic effect of DMT.

TRP: Were there follow-up sessions with volunteers to determine if there was any kind of long term psychological change or impact?
RS: Several volunteers participated in more than one study, so we followed them for as long as they were in our projects. One fellow was in every study, and in every pilot project (in which doses, or combination of doses, were determined). We always asked these repeating volunteers how they were faring, what impact their participation in the research was having on their lives. About a year after the completion of the initial dose-response study, our research nurse contacted and interviewed each of those volunteers.

We had "socials" after the completion of each study. All the volunteers from that study, and the preceding ones, were invited to meet, bring food and drink (it was interesting to see how little

alcohol was consumed at these get-togethers), and compare notes. This was a helpful debriefing process for recent volunteers, and a good chance for old-timers to let us know how they were doing. An interesting phenomenon was the "support group" that spontaneously formed about a year into our second series of studies. Several volunteers felt the need to meet among themselves and with the research team, to discuss their experiences and how to make sense of them. For many, there were few, if any, friends or acquaintances with whom they could share their experiences. Some were concerned about being labeled "drug abusers" for the simple fact of their participation in our research. More commonly, they were wary of being misunderstood or blankly stared at when discussing DMT, aliens, implants, near-death, and out of body experiences commonly experienced during the high dose DMT state. This group met quarterly for about 12 to 18 months, and involved about one fourth to one third of the volunteers.

There would be only a few minutes for the volunteer to relax and get ready for the next dose.

For the most part, while the high dose of DMT was the most intense psychedelic experience of volunteers' lives, the overall long-term impact wasn't very profound. For the majority of volunteers, participation in the study was a highly novel, unusual, and stimulating experience, not unlike a visit to an extremely exotic destination. They had memories and "photographs," but did not necessarily experience personal transformation as a result. This may have had a lot to do with the fact that they were all seasoned psychedelic takers.

Some people stated they were much less afraid of death or of dying, due to the tremendous letting go of their bodies and minds that they experienced while on DMT. Others were convinced of the existence of separate dimensions of reality, and developed a certainty that these different levels were now positively interacting with them in both subtle and powerful ways. Some had mystical experiences, and felt that a life-long quest for such an experience was now completed. One former member of an ascetic religious order was glad to see his meditation could "stand up" to the DMT experience, demonstrating his religious development was solid, substantial, and deep.

Others, however, found the experience detrimental. One fellow got depressed after his participation, but worked things out by returning to psychotherapy. Another got depressed and needed to get on antidepressants; he had been depressed in the past, however, and also was in a highly stressful transition period in his life. Another fellow was so frightened by his high dose of DMT that he stopped tripping altogether; he had enjoyed "recreational" doses of psychedelics in the past, but now was afraid to even get close to the substances again. One fellow stopped writing poetry for the first time in over 20 years, as he had met such overwhelming existential angst in the depths of his high dose of DMT that he decided, "What's the point?"

TRP: What kind of impact did these studies have on you as a researcher? Did you have any notable emotional reactions to the study as it progressed?

RS: My reactions to these studies evolved over the four plus years of their performance. Frank disbelief that I was actually able to give DMT quickly gave way to unbridled enthusiasm, and perhaps a little bit of recklessness after our first few handfuls of doses. This was dashed by our two harrowing 0.6 mg/kg studies in which our volunteers became delirious.

The next stage was wonder, honor, curiosity, gratitude, excitement, and gratification during our dose-response study. Many people had peak experiences on their first high dose sessions, and I was happy to see this. The number and degree of acute and obvious adverse effects were minor. I knew all but one of this first group of volunteers quite well, and that helped us in negotiating this unknown

For the most part, while the high dose of DMT was the most intense psychedelic experience of volunteers' lives, the overall long-term Impact wasn't very profound.

territory. As well, the tolerance study, which was the next one after the dose-response work, showed some more substantial promise as a potential therapeutic tool than the single high-dose sessions.

The next series of studies were more technology- and chemistry-intensive, and were both harder to recruit for, and more difficult to put into a context with which I was comfortable. I began feeling I was taking more than I was providing, and there was a discomfort with the humans-as-large-rats model that this type of work implied. The trust and honesty that are so crucial to the success of a high-dose psychedelic experience were being compromised.

Also, to my surprise and sadness, people's initial high-dose breakthrough sessions were beginning to sound a little hollow. I think this was because, by following our early volunteers, I saw that the drug experience itself had little substantial impact on most people's lives. I was also seeing people have several, if not many, high dose sessions from participating in subsequent studies. While they certainly were "getting high," they weren't quite "getting it." Without noticing it at first, I was being given the answer to the deepest unasked question of my research: Do these drugs have beneficial effects by themselves? And the answer was: "No." Then, the question arose, "Well, then, are you harming people?"

TRP: From your findings, do you believe it's safe to continue research with DMT in a clinical or therapeutic setting? What do you see as potential dangers, if any?

RS: Safety has to be taken in the context of risk versus benefit. If a procedure is incredibly dangerous, but the potential utility is great for a condition with no other treatment, the risks might be justifiable. If a procedure is high risk, and the condition is mild, or there are other lower-risk and effective ways of dealing with it, it isn't ethical

to expose the person to the high-risk procedure. If the procedure is low risk, then most conditions would be amenable for its use.

I think DMT is a high-risk procedure, especially the higher doses, at which its unique properties are manifest. Blood pressure effects are intense. People get scared. Some were traumatized. The effects are incredibly weird. And our volunteers were generally stout, experienced psychedelic veterans. How much more risky would it be giving DMT to psychedelically naive individuals, especially those with medical or psychiatric problems? How much information could you provide them to feel they were actually giving "informed" consent?

There are a range of potential dangers with DMT and other psychedelics. This range is from subtle to gross. The gross dangers are obvious: bad trips, flashbacks, post-trip anxiety, depression, confusion. The more subtle ones have to do with a false sense of understanding, or wisdom, that can occur when psychedelic experiences aren't carefully examined from multiple perspectives. They can feed delusion, separateness, and illusory resolution of conflicts. This is a certain false plausibility that is quite insidious and difficult to confront.

People assume that high dose psychedelic experiences, due to some overlapping features with the near-death experience, and mystical experience, can be helpful. For example, if DMT offers a glimpse of the intermediate state between life and death, maybe it could provide a dry run for those afraid of dying, or for those who believe such an experience might prove beneficial later on. However, what if we're wrong on that count? What if the DMT state and death have nothing to do with each other? What if we are expecting death to be a certain way, and then, because of our assumptions, are absolutely shocked and confused when it's nothing like a DMT trip? Also, in the case of dying, what if someone has a bad trip with very little time to repair the damage? What if they die in a worsened psychological or spiritual state, with them and their family cursing you?

In terms of the mystical experience, again, what if we're wrong? What if, when undergoing a non-drug elicited mystical experience, we later compare it to a drug-induced state? Was it a flashback? Was it real? The certainty that otherwise would be ours might be subjected to doubts that otherwise would never have arisen. On a more subtle level, there is the "stealing" aspect of taking psychedelics, a reinforced, and reinforcing sense of cynicism that we don't have "something," and that "taking" a drug will provide that something. We are feeding from the spiritual realms, what should be sought after in the other ones, such as physical, psychological, or emotional.

Maybe someone is lonely, and takes psychedelics to establish relationships with non-material beings or entities, or to experience an overwhelming sense of oneness or wholeness. It would make more sense, and be healthier, to have friends, or belong to a social group. Maybe someone is depressed, and takes psychedelics to experience euphoria. It might be more helpful to look at the relationships in their life, with people and ideals, that are dissatisfying. Otherwise, we could be using up capital from the wrong accounts.

There are the more wide-ranging dangers that involve issues of interdependence, or ecology, that involve our relationships with

lower animals, particularly when it comes to biomedical research, and the development of new compounds. Look at the way data are derived from the basic, or animal, research. Animals are often given high doses of radioactive psychedelics, and then killed; they are decapitated, brains quickly removed and processed, then sliced and photographs taken to see where the drugs went. Or, the brains are removed before the drugs are given and a brain slurry is made to which radioactive drugs are added. Sometimes non-radioactive psychedelics are given, and other radioactive drugs are given to displace or otherwise affect the binding of the non-radioactive drugs. Other studies employ electrodes placed into a living animal's brain (or a barely living slice of brain kept in a solution of blood-like fluid) and psychedelics are given to see what the effects are on the electrical activity of particular nerve cells in the brain or slice. At a certain point, I had to decide to not involve our group in PET scan studies that would have involved injections of radioactivity while they were tripping.

Many of those engaged in this type of research are otherwise kind, gentle, and thoughtful people. However, there is a certain friction between what they are doing and what they wish to be the results of their work. This tension affects all those involved with psychedelics, both those who give them and take them in this model.

There also are dangers in giving psychedelics. I don't think psychiatrists or psychologists generally are very good choices for those who give psychedelics. They often have neither the experience, sensitivity, nor training to support, contain, direct, and interpret many of the more unusual experiences that come up on high doses of psychedelics. Also, and this was something I had a very difficult time facing up to, even after years of therapy, analysis, and meditation, there are less than noble motivations driving the desire to give drugs. Unexamined sadistic, narcissistic, sexual, controlling, manipulative, needy impulses are readily activated when you give such powerful, debilitating, and dependency-producing drugs. I remember how we all laughed when one volunteer, a millionaire businessman, opened his eyes after his high dose of DMT and said, "This would be a great time to ask for a big donation."

Our research was subject to an incredible amount of checks and balances. I never gave high doses of DMT without a nurse or other assistant in the room. How much more prone to abuses are those who give drugs without peer review, regulatory boards, administrative oversight, and other moderating influences? There are also dangers in relying upon psychedelic research data. In the research environment, you always want something from someone: data. And, wanting something from someone in the research environment affects the psychedelic experience in negative ways. For example, if you don't get data when you expect it, you get greedy, angry, frustrated. You try harder to draw that blood sample, look at that dilated pupil, complete that rating scale. While I know this sounds a little naively idealistic or overdone, it is not trivial if you're a highly stoned research volunteer relating to a research team you want and need to place your well-being above all other considerations.

Perhaps psychotherapy research might avoid some of these problems. And, the potential benefit of a new treatment for an untreatable condition might justify the stress put on volunteers. However, the quality of your data changes when you want things,

and those data are then suspect when applied to a non-research setting. For example, the resentment and paranoia that might occur in a psychedelic psychotherapy research volunteer who can't, or won't, agree to a research intervention might have little to do with how a psychedelic psychotherapy patient might respond to the same drug at the same dose in an office setting, where no such expectations are in effect.

TRP: What kinds of unanswered questions are left open by your research? Do you have any plans to go back to it?

RS: My primary question, whether DMT is a beneficial drug, in and of itself, was answered in the negative.

There are other clinically oriented questions that have come up around many people's research with psychedelics, including mine. These have to do with the best way to use psychedelics. From the medical model, one could ask what conditions would justify the high risk associated with DMT? What other treatments are available and how risky are they? What is the likelihood of DMT being effective versus how effective might alternative treatments be?

I don't feel a pull to get reinvolved with this research. The decision wasn't made completely until just a short while ago. The appeal is great, but I spent a month waking up every morning, imagining how it might feel to be going in to work giving DMT/LSD/psilocybin to someone that day. The feeling wasn't very good. I learned what I needed to learn, and anything more seems gratuitous. I opened the door to this research for our generation; let other people go through and take advantage of what I've set in place. If people think these drugs are so important to study, why don't they get themselves qualified and write the protocols, and do the research? It is now possible.

If drugs are to have any use at all (and this is by no means a

He was right in the beginning of a giant DMT flash, being confronted by a large black female warrior with a spear, who was enraged and astonished to find him in her space.

given), they should be part of an overall life dedicated to self-knowledge and a more compassionate life. This partakes of the perennial question: Do drugs have spiritual/religious import?

In Brazil, I met and spent some time with members of the Uniao de Vegetal, an ayahuasca-using church. Ayahuasca, as you know, is a combination of two plants, one of which contains DMT, and the other contains a compound that allows DMT to become orally active. Thus, it is a 3 to 5 hour, slow onset, slow offset, DMT experience. Their ceremonies were beautiful, moving, emotionally cleansing, and spiritually uplifting. The members were kind, the elders were powerful, wise, and inspiring. The ayahuasca was an integral part of their ceremonies. However, I don't believe the psychedelic brew informed the church. I think it was the other way

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an interview by James Kent

The following is part two of an interview with Terence McKenna which as conducted in the fall of 1993. In part one (TRP 3, page 42) we covered Terence's childhood, his college days, and his emergence into the psychedelic scene through the publication of his arcane thesis, *The Invisible Landscape* and an underground classic *The Magic Mushroom Growers Guide* (published under the pseudonym O.T. Oss) — both co-authored with his brother Dennis. In part two we actually get down to the nitty gritty details behind the madness and grasp for understanding of the ineffable.

James Kent: How did your success with the "Magic Mushroom Growers Guide" steamroll into a career?

Terence McKenna: As the new age got going, say '80, '81, '82, I just found it incredibly irritating, and I was busy consulting and staying home and I also had small children, but I just thought it was such a bunch of crap.

Talking about crystals and such?

Yeah, the crystal, aura, past life, channeling business and I said, you know, why don't these people check out drugs? What's the matter with them, my god? And finally someone persuaded me to say that in a public situation, and it's been constant ever since.

Could you be more specific about 'saying that in a public situation'?

Arthur Young invited me to give a talk at the Berkeley Institute for the Study of Consciousness and there were people there who were from Esalen. So from that came the invitation to Esalen, and there was a very far out guy at Esalen who has since died who really believed in psychedelics. And all through the '80s, which were kind of a Dark Age for this stuff, they held a conference every year and paid everybody to come. Anybody who was a researcher in psychedelics or who even had strong opinions... and we all got to know each other. That's what Esalen did; it actually created a community by bringing us together from all over the country once or twice a year. Stan Grof, Gordon Wasson, John Lilly, Dave Nichols, Myron Stolaroff, Rick Yensen... virtually anybody who now has any visibility in the movement got to know everybody else during those years. And we all proceed in different directions, you know. I mean, Sasha is the great synthetic chemist, I'm the plant advocate, Grof is the transformative Freudian... people have their own bailiwick.

So what do you hate most about what you do? What just burns you up every time?

United Airlines. (Laughs) I'm getting nutty on the subject of how much I hate to fly 'cause I'm convinced that these air flights, especially the ones to Europe where they fly really high, you know, they recirculate the air, and if one person has the flu... So you arrive in Hamburg and you're supposed to get your act together and give a talk and you realize you're getting the flu. I hate the flying. I'm a hermit. I mean, my natural inclination is to be alone. I have been alone at times in my life for very long periods of time with perfect contentment. So it's kind of strange that I'm cast in this very public role.

What would you most like to spend your time doing?

I like doing some kind of research with a lot of books and a quiet setting. I mean, if I were not me for instance, I would go to a company like Voyager in L.A. and say, "Hire me to build a CD-ROM of Ulysses." And I'd take the text and put it on the surface and then line up the streets of Dublin and all the stuff behind. That's the kind of thing I like. I like tight, meticulous work. I've had jobs like insect specimen preparer in museums and art conservation and all these little, tiny, nitpicky kind of things. I really like that 'cause I can think when I have a job like that.

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How much of what you do do you feel is just pure crap, just absolute, well... garbage?

What I hate is repetition, and that's what drives me crazy is the pressure to be more creative than you can be unless you repeat yourself. I would rather give three talks a year and have each one be absolutely stunning and unique than give 25 talks a year and have them be these weird clones of each other.

What do you perceive your potential to be now, as far as what you can accomplish in the future?

Well, I've laid out a theory that's very radical, but very complete in the sense that modern theories must be founded in mathematics. Otherwise, you don't have a theory, you have an idea. So, this theory is very complete, but very radical. The spirit in which I do intellectual work is closer to science than to anything else. I like criticism. I think there should be rules of discourse and rules of evidence. And if you can't stand behind your product you should prepare to abandon ship. So, the role I will play over the next 18 years, god willing, is advocate for this peculiar notion, trying to communicate it, and trying to invite a critique of it. I would like to have the best minds on the planet tell me where I went wrong. I'm willing to accept their judgement, but I want to have the dialogue.

Who do you feel would be qualified to evaluate what you've pulled out of the King Wen sequence?

Good question. Well, the problem is I have reached competent people, Ralph Abraham for example. But you think in your naivete that if you've discovered a world-shaking principle all you would have to do is run into the street waving it and people would say "This is great, he's discovered a world-shaking principle!" In actually trying to carry it out you discover that people say it isn't a world-shaking principle. Or they say, "You didn't discover it, this was discovered in 1830 by Wemmelholtz." (Laughs) And your enthusiasm and certainty dissipate in the face of this peculiar attitude towards innovation. So, I've learned the only way to truly innovate is: big ideas must have advocates, so I will argue my position in any forum with anybody until it becomes clear to me that my ideas are absurd. And over time, an intellectual environment is like a natural environment; ideas are selected by natural selection. The better ideas survive.

Meme wars...

Yes. You have to get your candidate onto the playing field.

So, specifically, if you could cut it down to 5 or 6 sentences, a sound byte, let's say, what is your agenda?

Well, agenda implies...

If you're advocating something...

I think the world needs to awaken to the presence of the transcendental other and its accessibility through psychedelics. This is the single most important discovery of the 20th century. It came through anthropology. It came through a more careful examination of the societies of people previously dismissed as barbarians. And this discovery is as challenging and potentially capable of refashioning our institutions as the discovery of the New World was for Renaissance Europe.

So how would you gauge your own historical importance?

Well, if I'm right I'm Newton, if I'm wrong... I'm crazy. There's no middle ground. Or at least I like to think there's no middle ground because I would like it to be that way. This is the scientific impulse to force clear resolution of the data. I've discovered enough already about the I Ching that... I mean these matters are very technical, but I feel I'm on pretty firm ground. I'm waiting to meet the person who can overthrow this. That's who I want to meet, the person will just sit down and say "Whoa, my dear, hello, you've completely forgot X," and I'll say "Oh!"

How do you cope with the power that you have, now that you have people listening? Do you ever worry about accountability coming into play here?

No, I don't. I suppose I should. As far as the following... I just blame this on sort of the childishness of our age. Look at Steven Hawking. Talk about an unlikely person to inspire groupies. I mean the man is a theoretical physicist who's seriously handicapped and barely comprehensible. But lord, by minions! This is very hard for me to relate to and understand. I meet so-called celebrities and the people who take themselves seriously are unbearable. This whole culture is a bunch of hype. Did you see Madonna's movie?

Truth or Dare?

Yeah... where they bring somebody back to meet her... Kevin...

Oh, Kevin Costner.

Yeah. She turns to the camera and says, "Why is it that if you're a celebrity everybody thinks you should meet other celebrities?" And this is because we are essentially a very infantile culture. I have a great faith in my own ineffectiveness. Anybody who thinks they are pushing the world over the brink or saving the world from going over the brink is severely deluded about the nature of metastable systems. I wish people would just pass through me on their way to the information, and the information is to be found in books, of course. That's where it is.

What sort of problems have you had with government authorities?

None.

None? In your entire life?

Oh, no. Well, when I was a hashish smoker years and years ago in the '60s I had many problems with the American government, but we seem to have gotten that all ironed out. As far as this public career of drug advocacy this question is always asked, asked a great deal. Nobody has ever called me on the phone or even allowed me to be certain they were there, you know. No pressure, no matter how subtle, has ever been put on me.

Well, you're also very subtle yourself. You're not as outspoken as say, Tim Leary was. You're not a rabble-rouser...

If you follow me around enough I can be baited into rabble-rousing. People say, "How come they don't come and get you?" and I've said it's because I use too many big words. They don't know what this is. They don't care. And anyway, my theory about drugs and the government is where money is not being made, they're not interested. What they're interested in are people making \$100,000 a day dishing out blow in some rat's nest somewhere. Since I'm not making any money off illegal drugs it must be fairly dull to them I think.

OK, let's discuss hypercarbolation. Did Dennis come up with this on fly, sort of out thin air?

Out of thin air.

So if I understand you correctly: at La Chorrera sonically induced superconductivity was used to intercalate psychoactive molecules into the rungs of DNA...

Close, say it again.

You claim that Dennis used his voice to sonically induce a state of superconductivity that could bind or 'intercalate' psychoactive molecules into the rungs of DNA.

Yeah, to intercalate these molecules between the rungs. Yeah, that's it in a nutshell.

Are you the only specimens to try that?

Yes, to my knowledge.

So it's never been attempted since then?

Well, it was hard to find a volunteer willing to go bananas for three weeks, which is what happened to Dennis, you see. As Bill Burroughs said, "We need a worthy vessel." (Laughs)... It would be very interesting to me, and maybe... You asked about my agenda. I suppose this is on my agenda, to gain enough attention that serious money would be spent looking at some of these assertions. I mean, can you use sound to intercalate drug molecules into DNA? This question could be settled with test tubes. You don't need human beings, you just need square wave generators and...

Isn't Dennis sort of travelling that route?

Well, yes, but these chemical companies, they're not always hiring him to check out his fantasies of early adulthood. Dennis' attitude toward all this is very ambivalent, because he's the guy who basically ate the shit end of the stick. Are you going to interview him?

I'll be catching up with him at some point, yes.

He looks older than I am, but he's 4 years younger than I am. I get the feeling that I'm regarded as... let me reach for the word... I'm not finding it. It's somewhere between obstreperous... uh... A lot of people would like [La Chorrera] just to go away. Nobody saw as much as I saw. People saw lesser pieces of it. A lot of people are in certain levels of denial about what happened. Apparently this is the normal course... you get old, you forget all that crazy shit you were into. You go to

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work for a corporation. You get life insurance. It hasn't worked out for me that way. I saw too much. I know too much. They're gonna have to prove it to me that it didn't happen. Sneering has no effect on me. I'm immune to it. And Dennis' view is, I think, that he doesn't really know what happened and he doesn't really like thinking about it because it lies right next to this issue of going bananas for 3 weeks.

How do you feel about insanity?

It's an occupational hazard.

Do you fear it?

Mmhmm. I don't think anybody could do high doses of... I mean, some people are so lumpen that they don't connect to the implications. You know, they take 10 grams of psilocybin and [in his best bong-toke Cheech and Chong voice] "Wow that was really fuckin' weird, maaaan."

(Laughs)

Right. So what about that? And they somehow blow it off. But I think the more intelligent you are, the more terrifying psychedelics become because you can't talk yourself out of it. You can't just say, "Oh, a buncha weird shit," you know. You took it because you took it seriously and now it's taken you seriously.

Let's talk a little bit about this spiraling hum Dennis produced. Have you checked it out? Is it a key, is it a note?

Well, I'm not... I have a total blind spot in the realm of musical nomenclature. I suspect that a musician of a certain type could listen to this and say, "Oh, that's a..." Because here's what it is: [makes an ooooweeeeoooweee noise that ascends in frequency at an accelerating rate] Now, that kind of ascending thing is obviously a smooth function of some sort, and someone who understood acoustics or music would just say, "Oh, that's an asymptotic something or other."

Have you ever taken the wave and fed it through a sound mapper?

No. See, there's never been money or... there's a kind of ambivalence about looking at all this stuff. I am not competent... I was not competent to do the experiment at La Chorrera and I didn't do it. The fact that the people who were competent to do it are phobic of it raises a certain problem. All of this, we've at times made lists of experimental approaches to various aspects of what was asserted about La Chorrera. There are many, many different approaches you can take. It's just they all require time, money, and staff.

Are you familiar with the work of H.P. Lovecraft?

Absolutely! I cut my teeth on H.P. Lovecraft. Dennis too.

It seems that a lot of the imagery you pull out of psychedelics, especially this insectoid creature...

Do you associate it to Nyarlathotep, the crawling chaos, or Cthulu? (Laughs)

Well, I was thinking of one deity in particular, [name omitted for safety of readers], who appears only within states of mad raving. Hey dwells in the intersection of time and space, and is referred to as the blasphemous evil which lurks just beyond the silken veil...

Well, Dennis told me recently that he inhibited his MAO with some not very good ayahuasca, and since it was so boring having done this he smoked some DMT with his MAO all inhibited. And he said it was *appalling*. And he said you just feel this thing, and it's a mind, and it's there, and you're locked into it like that. He said it says, "Behold, oh mortal, if you can, the form of (unintelligible growl)!" (Laughs)

And of course every beast in Lovecraftian lore is revealed exactly like that...

Yes, Ya Shugothoth...

Shub Nigguroth...

...The goat with a thousand young! (Laughs)

Let's talk about DMT for just a moment. You obviously have a lot of well thought out opinions and ideas, but you're very easy to dismiss as a crackpot because of these things you say about DMT and self-dribbling jeweled basketballs and such.

Poke away, if people want to dismiss, they should at least...

dimethyltryptamine

Right. Your answer, of course, is to take the ten minutes and see for yourself.

Yes, it's only ten minutes.

Why do you continue to pull it out of the closet? Don't you think there's a point where you say, "I've talked enough about the DMT elves. I don't want to talk any more about the elves. There are other, you know, important things." I'm curious as to...

Well, let's see. DMT is the most interesting thing I've ever encountered. Essentially what you're saying is that I'm not being very strategic, and wouldn't it be better if I just didn't mention it. But you're talking to someone who is a profound thinker. I mean, you couldn't discover the timewave and not be a profound thinker. So the idea that I could either speed up or slow down the unfoldment of the thing is completely at variance with the mystery I'm trying to articulate. And I do think that in terms of assertions made, the assertions I make about DMT are not overly outrageous, and the means of proving them are simply to do it. Other people make mad assertions, but they're not so easily overcome. I've asked people to smoke DMT in order to disprove what I'm saying. I don't think they will, and I think there's a lot of arguing about what goes on and I don't think people do high enough doses... But I think that it's too accessible; it's not hard. I mean, you know, most people think you have to trek up a jungle river or go to Jupiter or something like that. This is something interesting that you can do in the confines of your apartment. (Laughs)

I've heard people say that you've adopted DMT as a clever vehicle to put yourself in the forefront of the psychedelic community because DMT is such an obscure compound and there hasn't been much exposure of it. So it's almost like you've latched onto the one molecule that no one wants to latch onto because...

Because it's so bizarre? When I smoked DMT for the first time it was 1967, and I figured that there would be pandemonium on the planet within the next three weeks. I thought surely you can't sit on something like this, but it turns out you can sit on something like this. So, I have always been amazed by how little it's discussed for a couple of reasons. Number one, it's so dramatic. Number two, it's so apparently harmless. It violates my notion of how reality is. I mean, this is designed for people who jump out of airplanes on Saturday afternoon to get their rocks off. And yet nobody's interested, you know. It's almost as though it is not rational. In other words, it's almost as though it carries its own protective shield or something. You don't hear about this until it wants you to hear about it, or something.

Before I came into contact with anything that you had to say about DMT all I heard about it was it's a nightmare, stay away from it. It's a rollercoaster ride through hell.

(Laughs) Well, now who could stay away from something described as a rollercoaster ride through hell? (Laughs) I mean, you could spend 5 million dollars and build a rollercoaster ride through hell and you would expect people to line up to the horizon for it. (Laughs) Hellicoaster!

I want to talk a little bit about the elves. I think that when you say DMT elves people picture, you know, Tinkerbell flying around.

Well, this is what I call the Disneyfication of elf land, and people expect cheerful friendly places that they know and can recognize. But it's much wierder and much more scarier than that; more like the lower-east side than it is like Wonderland.

So, when you say elves, they're not in the shape of human elves.

No. Here's what is elf-like about them. You have the impression that you're underground. Elves live in the center of the earth. They make things. This is what elves are traditionally said to do. They are makers of jewelry and fine machinery. These things are involved in language somehow. They're involved in pun and riddle. This is standard elf material. And there is this very peculiar kind of out-of-control, madcap humor. Also, elves are tricky.

Plus there's the singing...

Yes, and the singing. I haven't carried out a study of the evolution of the image of the elf in the Western mind, but I think probably Disney and Grimm obliterated whatever had come before. But these things up until that time were very ambiguous creatures of the threshold and woodland. They were known for stealing babies primarily.

Have you ever considered they might be a reflection of some sub-atomic phenomenon?

Quantum creatures? Yes, I've thought of that. Because I take very seriously the question, "Where are they?" You know, are they here but invisible? Are they locked in the quantum realm? Are they on a planet around another star that we can

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somehow punch into on DMT? I take it seriously. I think it is like any other phenomenon of nature, it should be studied on its own terms.

Do they always seem to know you're coming?

Well, that may be an anthropomorphization. They cheer when you arrive.

You can't sneak up on them? (Laughs)

I don't think you can sneak up on them, no... (Laughs) Whether they're looking at their watches and waiting, I don't know.

It would seem that smoking DMT is now the doorway into their domain. Why don't they have some other way to move into our world, some sort of reciprocal vehicle to make the journey? I guess what I'm saying is... are there certain conditions in a person's life besides smoking DMT which you feel would make them accessible to this... or would make them the perfect vehicle for this sort of elfin mischief to occur?

I would really hope not. That's my definition of madness. That's why I'm not interested in the "do it on the natch" people. I think they're sailing towards the cataracts. The last thing you want is to be able to do it on the natch, 'cause if you can do it on the natch there's a possibility that you cannot fucking stop it. (Laughs) I mean, I would be very alarmed if any sort of psychedelic effect established itself in ordinary consciousness. These are radical alterations of consciousness sustained by peculiar pharmacodynamics. You don't want that settling down on your tea party.

You're fond of the notion that these elves may be ancestors, or at least that's the party line as far as shamans go.

Shamans say they're souls, yes.

Does it follow necessarily that they're human ancestors or just "those who have come before?"

Well, they're more like a human being than they are like an animal because they possess language. The two things that human beings do that animals don't, they do. Number one, they communicate linguistically. And two, they're fools for technology. I mean, it's a strange technology, but they're no weavers of cocoons, these elves. They make stuff, all kinds of stuff.

(Laughs) You obviously, (or maybe you don't) notice some similarity between your accounts of the DMT experience and catalogs of near death experience from the beginning of time. What's your comment on this?

Well, I mean, I certainly moved here without great conviction or certainty. You ask what is my opinion and I give it and I think it doesn't count for much more than that. But this is the central problem or the central dilemma of modern science: what is the status of spirit in relationship to organic life? And for 300 years the answer has been "none whatsoever." However, we're not getting as far with reductionism, empiricism, and behaviorism as we thought it would carry us. It appears that we've left something out. I think that it is this awareness of spirit, whatever that means. It means an architecture of connectedness in an invisible dimension. I think this is what the DMT establishes so dramatically. And that's why it's such an important, pivotal issue.

Why do you think that smoking it is so important?

As opposed to injecting it? Oh, because it's much more dramatic. This is one of the things that have caused science to not understand what I'm talking about because pharmacologists love to inject people with drugs. This is because they can get an absolute, quantified dose in the barrel of a syringe. I have not shot DMT, but I've talked to many people who have and I've studied the medical reports. It is nothing like smoking it. It comes on slower, it does not reach such an intense peak, and it goes away slower.

It's very hard to talk about DMT. The wildest metaphors are in fact lies... even mine are lies. There is something which happens which lies beyond the possibility of description and that's the strangest part of the DMT experience. And then all the parts you can describe which people say "Jeez, that really sounds weird..." - that isn't it.

What countries is DMT illegal in besides the United States? Do you know?

I don't know. I suspect in practical terms very few. Probably it's illegal in all the high-tech industrial democracies because they will all have signed the United Nations convention on narcotics. It is not actively suppressed anywhere in the world because, A, there isn't much, and B, it's not posing any kind of a medical problem. I mean, the way you judge a drug if you're trying to figure out whether to suppress it is to look at emergency room admission statistics.

It doesn't really seem to be the kind of substance that would cause a public health threat. I never understood why it was illegal, except that it just falls into that category of powerful things we don't really understand...

It was made illegal when they made LSD illegal. They made everything illegal without any evidence, medical or otherwise, being presented. And then when the feds decided to make everything illegal they used the California statute as a model... and again no medical or scientific data was presented. So, if a person had the money, the laws making DMT illegal could be pretty strongly challenged. Also, the fact that it occurs in the human body... that has never been debated in a court. Can you make illegal an actual human metabolite?

Transformative language is something you talk a lot about. You say, "If any significant change is going to be made within society, you need to first transform the language." Do you have any concrete idea about how one would go about doing that, or is this just a notion that you're fiddling with?

Well, no. I don't simply mean speaking more clearly or something like that. I mean that language can... Apparently the human neurological architecture is such that incoming audio signals can either be processed in a low-dimensional aural environment, or in a much richer, higher-dimensional visual environment. When we hear great poetry... what we call great poetry is language which triggers this active high-dimensional visualizing capacity. I think language aspires to visibility and that drugs like ayahuasca are allowing the people who use them to experience a kind of telepathy. It's not a telepathy of you hear what I think, it's a telepathy where you see what I mean. The fact that the chemicals in ayahuasca, DMT and harmaline, both occur in the human brain, and that they carry with them this peculiar transformation of language, pushing it toward the visible, suggests to me that in the human brain, the language functions are not yet genetically established and defined, and it could be that we're just a one or two gene mutation away from having our language go from radio to TV essentially. And what this will make, if possible, is a much richer field of communication. People will be able to both communicate and receive communication about much subtler and more finely delineated matters.

You also talk about an actual physical substance that will spontaneously take the shape of your thought.

Well, now we're getting into eschaton territory, although it is claimed by these off-river tribes like the Juarani, the Agaruna-Jivaro, the Witoto, these kinds of people... that the shaman does what he does with this magical, iridescent, blue phlegm, which they regurgitate. It was thinking about that, taking those reports seriously rather than just dismissing it as ignorant Indians, that led Dennis down the path toward hypercarbolation. We tried to take seriously the notion that you could actually physically change your body chemistry in very profound ways under the influence of psychedelics.

You use the word magic when you describe the fabric of reality and dismiss with the wave of a hand the laws of physics...

Well, not quite with a wave of a hand, but...

Well... what exactly do you mean when you say magic? Do you have a hard definition of it or is it magic in the sense of...?

No. I think Arthur C. Clarke gave the best definition of magic. He said magic is a technology you don't understand. I just don't understand the hubris of modern science. As we look back at the past every society has assumed that it had 95% of the right answers... and was wrong. So, why should we make the same stupid assumption? And of course we're wrong. Reality is incredibly mysterious. Science shines its light brightly in certain corners, but it doesn't illuminate the universe. It doesn't even illuminate the universe of the human body, let alone the human mind and soul.

So what do you plan to be doing December 22, 2012?

Paying careful attention. I will not be organizing an integrated worldwide group of rock festivals and performances, I hope. In fact, use this against me if I am.

(Laughs) Some clever promoter might latch onto it.

Well, I'm sure there will be those who cash in. People ask this question. It's funny to be at the center of all this. I'm not very attached. I understand how unlikely my assertion is...that it's a trillion to one chance. On the other hand I understand the consequences of my being wrong...no big deal. People are wrong all the time for crying out loud. I also know that this theory, which I feel is very strong... If I were off by 1%, the theory tells me I could be off by 10 million years. Well now, if I'm off by 1%, I say I'm dead on. But the theory says, well no, it isn't December 21, 2012, it's December 21, 2012 plus 10 million years. So, a reasonable person would expect nothing to happen. However, an intellectually honest person would give the

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situation every opportunity to overturn that expectation.

Are you going to be watching Headline News? (Laughs)

Well, no. The real answer to your question is if I'm right, I won't watch alone, because it won't sneak up on us. If I'm right, then by 2005, 2006, people will be looking at this theory to provide answers because what's going to happen if the theory is right is that it's going to get stranger and stranger until finally no amount of face-saving and explaining will be able to hide the fact that singularity stalks the planet.

Don't you think that people tend to ignore strangeness though? Strangeness happens all the time and yet they turn on their TV at 8 o'clock and it's gone.

Well, they have thresholds. The world we're living in is completely bizarre compared to the world we were living in 10 years ago. I mean, AIDS, multimedia, the disappearance of communism... If you had told somebody 15 years ago that within 15 years sexually transmitted diseases would threaten the human species, communism would be a memory, and people would be spending most of their time in machine-created environments, they would have been very puzzled. And this is just the beginning. We haven't hit the steep descents into novelty, which come after the turn of the century.

And you firmly believe there's some sort of art to this existence. It's a work of art...you say it's syntactical in nature like a musical score.

Yes, it's like a musical score. It's a complicated musical score.

That's why I asked earlier if you've ever thought about putting the timewave through a sound synthesizer.

Other people have suggested that. I'm simply not proficient enough with understanding sound and music to be the person to do that.

After the event at La Chorrera there was a period of time when you were not mentally stable, when you were very unbalanced in a lot of ways.

Well, there was a lot of debate. There was never an actual incident where people... I managed to avoid [a medical pronouncement]. There was just a lot of anguished conversation among my friends. Basically, my problem was that I had a one-track mind. I was obsessive about this stuff coming out of the I Ching and the timewave and the end of history and hypercarbolation and I would take roomfuls of people prisoner and hold them for up to 14 hours at a crack. Which is, of course, a sign of mania. On the other hand, I doubt that Shakespeare's plays or *Moby Dick* or Mont St. Michel were built without somebody giving a damn about how it came out.

Now there are other people who believe that the last page of the *Wall Street Journal* is where the CIA communicates, and they have theories and charts and cryptography all mapped out, and it's all very elaborate... What's different between what you're doing and what they do?

Well, the timewave predicts the past, and the past has happened, so there isn't a whole helluva lot of fudging you can do. Predicting the future is no challenge to anybody because who can rule you out of bounds? I think that, based on its ability to predict the past, judged by the ordinary ways we judge predictive success, that the timewave should be taken seriously. It isn't a mystical doctrine, and I don't defend it with mystical arguments. I put it forward as an exotic scientific hypothesis to be tested and overthrown by the usual methods.

I think I heard you once say that the DMT experience mimics itself in dream states sometimes. Have you heard accounts of this happening, or is this just a personal experience?

Oh, no. It's a personal thing and people have told me about it. What I actually said was if you smoke DMT, if you have the experience then, at some later time, even years later, you will have a dream in which a glass pipe is produced and the DMT flash actually occurs. And it occurs so dramatically in the dream that it suggests to me that this most dramatic of all psychedelic experiences is almost like a fingersnap away. There's some series of autonomic functions that if you could take hold of them - and biofeedback says you can take hold of any function you can monitor - if you could take hold of this particular function you could have a DMT flash at will.

But that's like you were saying "on the natch."

I don't think anybody's having DMT trips on the natch except in dreams. But if that were possible, you see, it would just

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change the entire discussion... it would end it. It would put it in the same category as sex. You're self-equipped; therefore nobody can stop you. (Laughs)

What defense do you have from people who dismiss you as a crackpot and say that any theory you come up with certainly can't be of any importance because you're not credentialed? I mean, what sort of credibility do you have?

Well, these people have clearly never read Thomas Kuhn's *The Structure of Scientific Revolution*. The only people who ever advance science forward are the people who come from the edge, from the outside, usually amateurs, usually not institutional. The way scientific advance happens is though completely irrational bursts of brilliance. Then they create a scenario of careful research and cross-checked data and slow accumulation. It doesn't happen like that. People are free to dismiss me, I don't even necessarily say they're wrong. The ideas need to be judged on their own merit. If they're saying they can't be true because I take drugs, that's like saying "It can't be true because he's a Jew" or "It can't be true because he's a homosexual." These are not sufficient reasons to dismiss anybody's ideas.

As an individual, what is your goal, besides sustaining yourself monetarily and not starving in the streets? Do you have some sort of goal that you would like to accomplish before your meeting with the infinite?

Well, in my heart of hearts, I really think that somehow... this must all be true. Otherwise it doesn't make much sense. Because I'm clearly not a raving mad person...

That's what they said in *The Tell-Tale Heart*.

Well, I may be a mad person, but... (Breaks into maniacal Edgar Allan Poe voice) "Mad, certainly not mad! True, nervous, nervous, highly nervous. But on the other hand..." (laughs) I have very modest goals I suppose. I would like the psychedelic experience to take its place as a respected vehicle of spiritual work. That's a modest thing to want. On the other hand, I feel like the transformation of the human species is possible, not in the far future, but now. And it may well be that we are going extinct. But, if so, it's an incredible tragedy because we could go to Alpha Centauri instead. So, it's not simply that we are going extinct the way of the dodo or the trilobite because there were no metaphysical stakes on the table with those extinctions. With us there is something, perhaps the destiny of life in the universe if in fact biology could be... If biology is unique to this planet then, my god, the moral responsibility that falls on us is practically inconceivable. And if it isn't, nevertheless, the fate of life on this planet seems to be in our hands.

So, I don't understand why there isn't more visionary dreaming going on. And, by that, I don't mean pleading for machine elves to take control of the IMF, I mean stuff like, why is there no effort to build down the military industrial complex worldwide? Why is there no effort to save the environment? It's not a bleeding heart issue; it's the ground you're standing on. And what we call progressives, like Bill Clinton, I hear nothing progressive, nothing visionary. And yet that is what leadership is supposed to be about. So, I feel very, very frustrated because I see the last, best chance of humanity, a good chance... being betrayed by incredible perversity and stupidity. I mean, I think John Kennedy screwed movie stars and was some kind of a rich brat from New England, but I don't think that he was empty of idealism about the destiny of the human race. And these other people seem to be. I mean, maybe Bill Clinton doesn't fuck movie stars. OK, points for that. But how about a vision?

I think he does...

I think he does too... but I don't care if they would just get up off of their dead duffs and do something. I mean, I can't believe the debates that go on. They want to close an airbase in Sacramento. So, you would think that Western civilization was on the block. Well, if you can't close an airbase near Sacramento, how in the hell are you going to get rid of nuclear weapons, feed the hungry, cure AIDS, and create a decent environment for 6 billion people? I am afraid that the answer is... just junk democratic processes and put the world in the hands of benevolent technocrats.

Philosopher kings.

Philosopher kings. Not Samosa's or Saddam's, but well intentioned. But what that means is that the highest aspirations of Western social thinking, which culminate in the democratic, self-regulating individual are being put aside. We're saying no, no, it turns out that the bulk of human beings are too infantile, too childish, to manage their own fates. And, of course the world is not staying simple, you know, maybe people could manage their own fates in 1760, but can they in 2000? And I say yes always. I am a radical democrat. I used to say if you come upon a group of people setting fire to a building, you have to have very good reasons not to join in that action because the people are doing it. Now, do you have an agenda or



understanding that is higher than what the people's agenda is? Some people say, "You're just an anarchist." And sure, fine. I marched behind that flag. That was the flag we carried in those demonstrations. We were never red, and in fact had total contempt for that. And were proven right I think. I don't know if that answers your question, but I'm very frustrated by the lack of imagination.

The way you manipulated the I Ching, was it directly from the voice of the mushroom?

It was pretty direct.

Telling you "OK, now do this."

Yeah, I had very little interest in the I Ching and no patience for that kind of behavior. I'd never done anything like that in my life. In fact, I've always felt that part of my life's problem personally was that I never go deep. And here I was, going deep, deep. I mean, I am pretty sure that many of the things I've discovered about the I Ching were put there by the people who created that sequence and have not been dealt with since. And god knows a lot of minds have fingered their way over the surface of that and they didn't find the way in. But I think I did and I think it's not a metaphysical assertion. Anybody who cares to can follow my argument and see if they agree or not.

Now, why exactly did you have the William Balnes translation of the I Ching with you in the Amazon?

I had picked up the habit four or five years before all this of just throwing the I Ching at the new and full moon. It is the only ritual in my life and I did it very unritualistically. And so, consequentially I happened to have it with me in the Amazon.

And what prompted you to turn to it at La Chorrera?

As near as I can reconstruct it... the first line of the dialogue that lasted years... the first line was... the mushroom spoke and it said, "Did you know, I'll bet you did know, that every day is made out of four other days." ... And it just led me through. I guess the strongest argument for me personally that I was dealing with something outside of myself and "real" whatever that means, was the way it was taught. It was just not my style, you know, and it just went on and on. Nobody else can share this perception because nobody knows what "my style" even means. But I tell you: it was not my style.

Now, this theory was sort of foisted on you. Did you go in asking for it? Did you say, "Give me your best shot?" Or were you just randomly chosen to be the bearer of this news?

Well, maybe something slightly different from either of those. I was puzzled by... As Dennis descended into this rave about the hypercarbolation I was all for it and I was fully backing him. But, every once in a while, this thought would cycle through: "And nothing for me?" So, in a sense I think this was the gift, you know. He got the hypercarbolation and I got the timewave.

Now, the other members of your party, were they as consciously "enhanced?"

Well, no. There was a lot of backbiting and controversy because... well, first of all the general irrationality of the situation. Also, I think at the time I did not give this enough weight because I had been butterfly collecting for 9 months before this all through Indonesia. But I think they were scared of the Amazon. And so, for me it was like another jungle, but for some of those people it was like, "Oh my god, we're 200 miles up this river and this guy appears to be losing his mind and his brother appears to be becoming..."

And you were 25 at the time? And the people you were with were 20, 22?

I was the oldest.

I can see how that would be daunting. (Laughs)

We were very different from any 22-year-olds that I've ever met. In fact, that amazes me; what serious people we were. I mean, when I think of the 60's I think of humping in a heap, and going to dances. But, my god, we must have been serious, serious, serious...

Did you ever experiment with oo-koo-he like you had...

Oh yes, that's a whole other cycle that I've never published or written about because it's somewhat... it just doesn't really relate to all this. But in 1981 Dennis and I went back with Wade Davis who wrote *The Serpent and the Rainbow*. Dennis was getting his Ph.D. then in plant biochemistry and we went after the oo-koo-he again. Not in Columbia. We went to a place

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In Peru where there was a displaced population of Witoto and we got numerous samples of oo-koo-he. We took them, Dennis wrote his Ph.D. thesis on them, and they were fully chemically analyzed. It's a kind of a downer in the sense that what we finally concluded was that the Virola trees, which are the source of that drug, are genetically degraded in some way. Anyway, what it does is that it races your heart like crazy. We did it, and on this one particular batch ~~where~~ I thought Dennis was having a heart attack basically, the next morning we sought out the shaman. And he said, "Yeah, it takes getting used to, doesn't it?" (Laughs) We said, "No shit, man!"

DMT or psychedelics as an alien artifact/technology - is this sort of a pet theory of yours or something you sort of latched onto?

Well, I'm not wedded to any of this. I just simply state the facts, and the facts are that, not DMT so much, which is pretty common in many plants and animals, but psilocybin. Psilocybin is 4-phosphoryloxy-NN-dimethyltryptamine. This is slightly technical but it is the only 4-phosphorylated indole on this planet. That's strange because the way biology works is if you have a molecule useful in a biological system, then in other biological systems you will get that same molecule or tiny variants; methylated or o-methylated. So here is psilocybin with the only hydroxylation in the 4 position on the planet. Well now, they search for extraterrestrial life with radio telescopes waiting for a signal. Fine. Another way would be to search the biological inventory of this planet for something that looks like it did not evolve from the main, broad flow of animal and plant evolution. And if you do that, this 4-phosphorylated indole is sticking up there like a sore thumb. I'd like to see a paper about how many of these kinds of chemical anomalies are known to exist on this earth in life. And what's the explanation for this? I've never seen anybody discuss this kind of thing. And yet to my mind the psilocybin molecule is as artificial as a Coke bottle.

As it appears in nature.

As it appears in nature. If you'll just inventory nature you'd pick this molecule up and say, "Well what is this!"

What's the difference between that and the 4-ring indole in LSD? Is it because it's produced synthetically?

Well, LSD is a more complicated... LSD is produced quasi-synthetically. Usually they go from ergot, which is actually a natural product.

It's also a fungus isn't it?

Yes it is. It's not a mushroom, but it's a fungus. It's not a basidiomycelae. LSD is a more complicated molecule with a 3-dimensional architecture. Most psychedelic molecules are flat and planar, and in fact that's why they will fit in-between the base pairs of DNA. They're just little, thin sheets that shoot right in there. That I think is an incredibly peculiar situation that I've never heard anybody talk about. I mean, why is it that these drug molecules fit perfectly into DNA? Coincidence? Well, but the DNA is the core stuff, it's not letting anything in there that hasn't passed four billion years of evolutionary vetting. So, the fact that these molecules activate mind and have a relationship to the genetic material seems to me highly suggestive. Also, in here, the unsolved mystery of memory. Where are the memory traces? If your body changes every molecule every five years, then how can an eighty-year-old person remember the pattern of their grandmother's dress? I think that memory is one of those areas where reductionist science is sailing close to the rocks. I don't think you can produce a theory of memory out of reductionism.

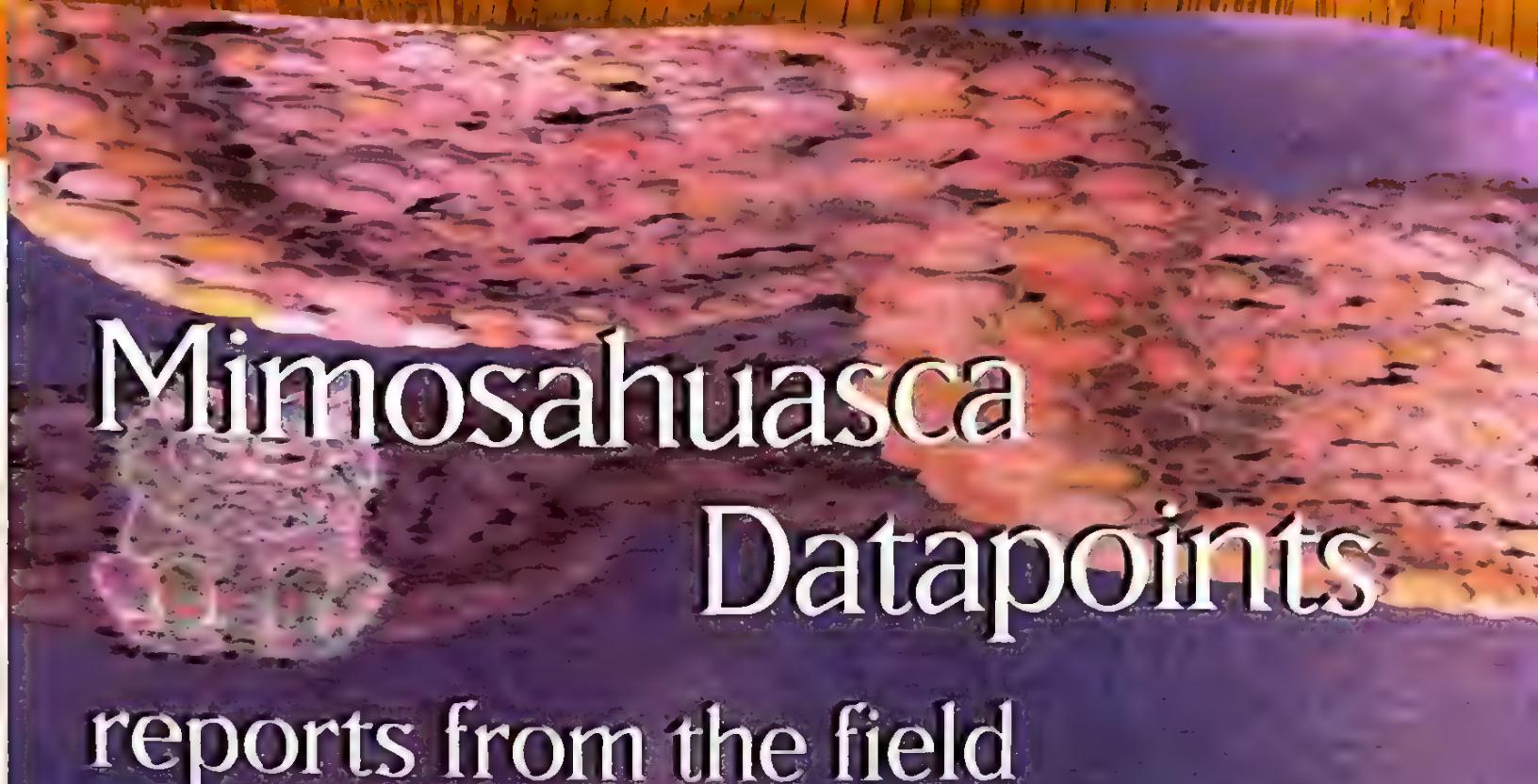
Has anyone ever mapped the physio-pharmacological change in the body when smoking DMT?

You mean the actual breakdown pathway? No. The amount of research done on DMT is vanishingly small. It was discovered in '56 by a Czech. It was illegal by '66. There was a 10-year window of research. During those 10 years they didn't know how to do what we can do now, which is make what are called positron-emitting drugs. You see, if you make a radioactive drug, you actually put a radioactive atom into the drug. You can give that to cats and rats, but you can't give it to human beings because you're going to kill the animal four hours after administration. But with positron-emitting drugs, they give a strong signal in a CAT scan, and they're completely safe. And so what should be done now is some hot or warm DMT should be made. Dave Nichols could make it. He made hot harmine for Dennis. And then, give it to people in a CAT scan and see where it goes. I'm not sure what we would learn from that, but Dennis used positron-emitting LSD. In fact, he actually solved the mystery of where does LSD go in the human brain. 95% of the labeled LSD ended up in the clostrum, which was completely a surprise. The clostrum is an ancient brain sub-organ way in the back, way underneath.

The reptilian sub-brain.

continued on page 48 >

dimethyltryptamine



Mimosahuasca Datapoints

reports from the field

Field Report 1: by INNER GORILLA

i had a companion for this journey, mr. buddy goodlove, and our ground control for the evening was the lovely miss snow. buddy indicated that he had already taken his MAO inhibitor, around 7 pm that evening: waiting for us back at his place was some syrian rue goop that he had extracted and put into gel caps. as i remember it was probably 9 pm by the time i swallowed mine. we looked at an old issue of *The Resonance Project* for additional reference; there's an article on mimosahuasca preparation which offers three different recipes ("Ayahuasca Cookbook," TRP#2). all of the recipes that i've seen have been for different dose ranges, in terms of grams of root bark required. i've seen as low as 8g, as high as 20g. we opted for 16g a piece, boiled it down to a black goo which we could then easily and handily roll into little balls and eat, washing down with coca-cola as appropriate.

ingestion took place probably around 10pm.

as one simple disclaimer for the viewing audience: i often "take a lot". sometimes i take too much; your mileage may vary. *please* do the research before swallowing something you've never swallowed before, or before swallowing a large amount of something which previously you had only consumed in small amounts, or before swallowing familiar things in unfamiliar combinations. *please* do the research, that's all. it's not hard.

buddy was only able to eat about half of his goo that night. he seemed very sensitive, and as he told me, his diet had coincidentally been clean all week, and he had fasted that day. so the experience caught him up almost instantly it seemed, within no more than a half an hour or less of eating his goo. i lagged severely behind. he was vomiting profusely at a point when i could only wish that my stomach was as eager; i'd been having digestive trouble all day, and it wasn't getting better. as soon as he was done vomiting, he stretched out in front of the stereo and was far far gone as jhno's

excellent (unreleased) cd "the evolution of consciousness through resonance" played. i contented myself to being unable to vomit, to lying on the couch playing a game with myself of trying to convince myself to vomit. i dry heaved several times, but to no avail. and i knew that i wouldn't *really* start tripping til after i vomited, so i began to get content with the notion that i simply wasn't going to trip as hard as i had last time. i was surfing through a kaleidoscopic whirlwind, to be true, but i was dissatisfied, felt that the "content" wasn't up to snuff.

buddy was having a riotous time it seemed, and at one point he made it very very clear that he had no intention of finishing his dose. so i finished it for him. that would leave the final tally at buddy getting very very very well off at an estimated 8g of the root bark, and me then following up with approximately 24g of the root bark.

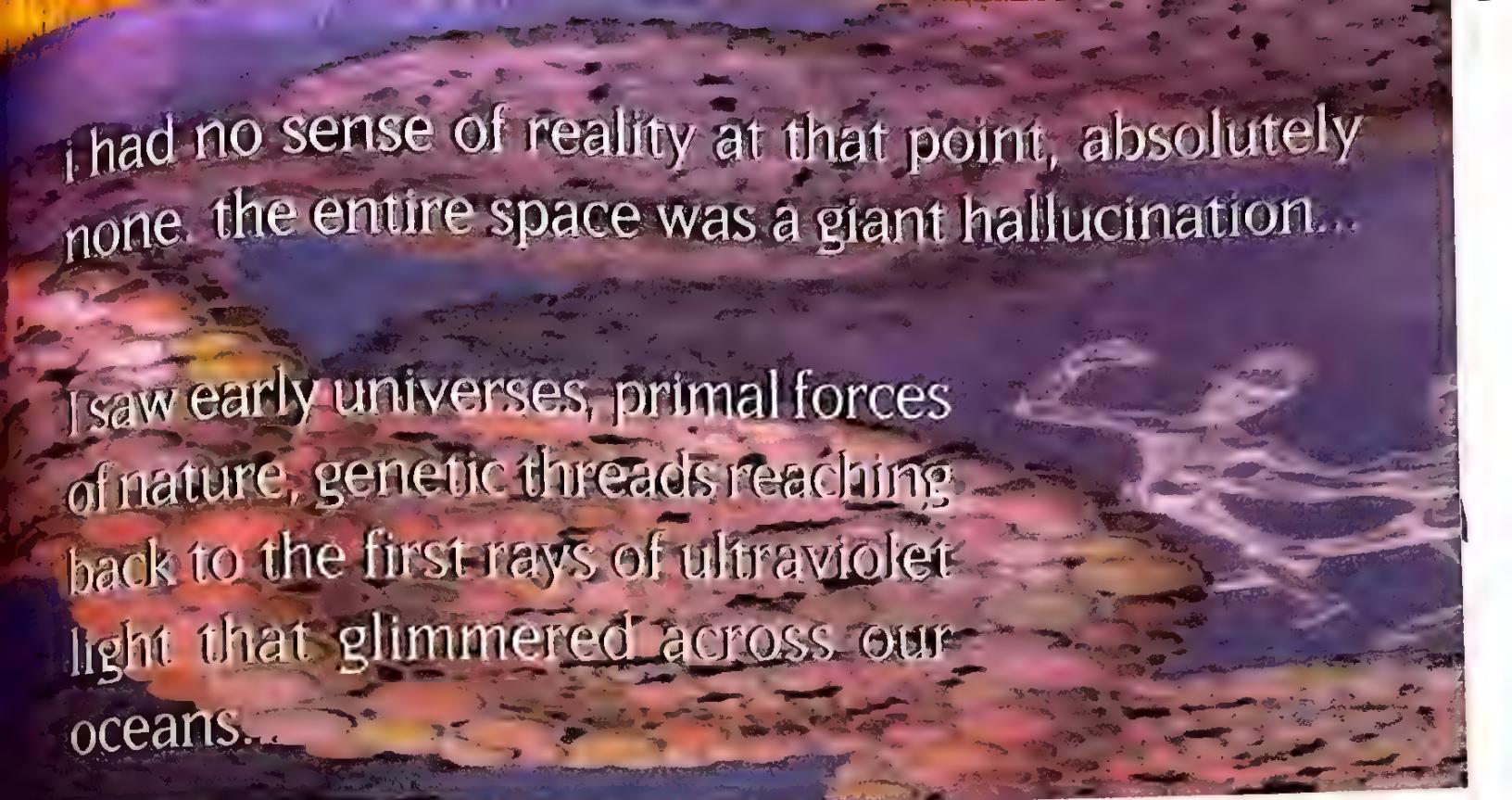
"that's a lot!"

—

i started really really coming on during woob, a favored ambient techno cd. hearing woob while under the influence of an extended tryptamine session is something else. recommended. this part of the experience lasted most of that album, and involved a very deep trance. i don't remember what happened during that trance, other than that i explored the music very deeply. this experience involved no "entities" or "presences", just a heavy heavy rush of sensation, and eventually my personal reality being entirely torn apart.

—

my imagination ran *absolutely wild* that night. i literally thought that just about any particular one of my fantasies was on the verge of coming true. i mean, we riffed about all kinds of crazy ass stuff. riff after riff after riff, we riffed about buddy's future presidential campaign; we riffed about the plays i was going to stage, and the famous people i was going to meet. fame became a serious thing; every famous person i could think of became as crystal clear to me in my mind as any one of my actual friends. i had no sense of reality at that point, absolutely none. the entire space was a giant hallucination



i had no sense of reality at that point, absolutely none. the entire space was a giant hallucination.

I saw early universes, primal forces of nature, genetic threads reaching back to the first rays of ultraviolet light that glimmered across our oceans.

Field Report 2: by Rev. Buddy Goodlove

When my good friend INNER GORILLA suggested that we do mimosahuasca, I was skeptical. Ayahuasca brews had never been very successful for me, but I was assured that the mimosa bark came straight from Jonathan Ott so how could I refuse. The mimosa bark was so potent that when I opened the lid on the coffee grinder from powdering the first batch, a dusty mist poofed out and filled the air with the heady aroma of DMT. My eyes widened, and I knew I would not be disappointed. I began to extract.

After an hour or so of extracting and boiling the mimosa I was left with a sticky latex goo which appears to be most of the bark's natural gums and DMT. We had taken the rue extract about an hour earlier, so we let the mimosa-goo cool into a soft brown gum, rolled it into little balls, and ate it. There were also about two shot-glasses full of brownish-orange liquid which I called the "gurk". We debated about drinking it, but finally decided to split it. We clinked our glasses and chugged it down. This was a mistake. It was like drinking pure vomit itself. I so very much wanted to wretch at that point that my whole body shook with revolt. I held on. I knew I should wait at least a half hour to 45 minutes before I threw up just to let my system absorb everything.

That was a long 40 minutes. I drank some cola. I decided I would eat no more goo until I started to come on. If I wasn't high enough I would eat more, but somehow I figured I had eaten plenty. I put a little ball of mimosa gum in my pipe and lit a small toke. My lips and tongue tingled with the familiar sensation of vaporized DMT. Wow, I thought. I was sure I had eaten plenty. I just sat and breathed and tried to get a bearing for how my body was doing. I was relaxed but feeling a bit anxious. I was also getting chilly and sensed that there was some tingling and lightness in my extremities. I continued to breathe deep with my eyes shut and held my resolve to do so until I felt something that told me I was "undeniably" coming on.

After a half hour some definite geometric visuals began to dance

on my eyelids. I continued breathing deeper and deeper, and then something in me began to melt — kind of like how a block of cheese or a stick of butter in a microwave can melt away in the center and pour right out the side even though the shell of the block remains intact — it felt like that. It was like a little hole somewhere around my left kidney (around the back of my love handle) opened up and poured all this tension I had been holding in my body right out into the chair. The sensation left me feeling hollow — light and airy on the inside — like a giant empty vessel. Suddenly, the emptiness was filled with a spicy orange breeze whispering in through the cracks somewhere. "Hello DMT!" I said out loud.

The geometric lattices behind my eyes began to echo and overlap and bend around each other creating intense flowing fluorescent wire-frame 3-D matrices. I knew this space. The union had begun. Well, that was proof enough for me. I quickly shuffled over to my bucket and let it fly. I had no trouble purging once I had made up my mind that it was time. I heaved three times and was done. It was surprisingly liberating.

As I sat and let the internal stomach turmoil wind its way down, the cold sweat on my body was replaced with a powdery warmth. I was feeling opened up in all kinds of directions and was gearing into serious snuggle mode. I grabbed a blanket and some cushions and made myself prone before the temple of funk. I turned up jhno's "Evolution of Consciousness through Resonance" and got swept away. I watched life on earth evolve from the primordial seas up to the modern industrial age. I saw early universes, primal forces of nature, proto nucleotides convecting in hot steam pockets at the center of the earth, genetic threads reaching back to the first ray of ultraviolet light that glimmered across our oceans... It was seriously intense. It was the kind of history lesson I wish I had gotten in elementary school.

All this time I was also amazed by the fact that I actually knew the guy who made this music, and was blown away by what a genius he is. To me, genuis is just another word for being able to open yourself to the wisdom of the universe and carry that wisdom onto others.

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Yeah, nobody knows what it does. Everybody thought that the LSD was going to flow to the neurocortex.

That should be a sign right there that we're dealing with something that predates consciousness.

Well, I saw in *Science News* two weeks ago that marijuana receptors have been discovered in the spleen. And it showed a chopped up piece of spleen tissue glowing with hot THC that was sticking all over it. Yeah, I think neurophysiology is as Gandhi said of Western civilization: "It sounds like a good idea." (Laughs)

What would you say is the main difference between you and your theories set forth in *The Food of the Gods* and so forth and, say, Erich von Daniken [author of *Chariots of the Gods*]?

Number one, I should say I have actually never read Erich von Daniken. But I know exactly what you're saying. The difference is I'm not making any assertions that I don't think other people can satisfy themselves concerning the truth of. It's one thing to be the spokesman for an experience that can only be had at the whim of the gods in lonely cornfields. What I'm advocating is simply that people examine these psychedelic substances that are throughout nature. If somebody thinks I'm full of shit, that's fine, but did they do their homework? Did they in fact investigate the phenomenon? That's all I'm asking. I mean, I can't believe that this is thought to be so radical. What other science carries out its program of research without ever coming in contact with the subject of its concern?

But then there's also a rebuttal to that saying, "Well, psychedelics make you crazy... they're dangerous, they're not to be tampered with!"

Well isn't that what we're trying to find out? Do they make you crazy?

Well, for a lot of people, I'd say for the majority of people, the FDA has ruled them dangerous and their research has been done for them. They don't need to make these distinctions any longer.

Well, this is the larger question that you and I dealt with in a different context earlier, the infantilism of people. People can't be bothered to exercise their democratic rights. They can't be bothered to explore chemical states of mind on their own. Eventually, they probably won't even bother to have sex; it'll just come over the tube for them. There's an incredible abdication of individual responsibility and authenticity. That troubles me. Why should people trust the American government on the subject of psychedelic drugs? Has it ever been right about anything? I mean, any examples will be cheerfully entertained. Have they ever gotten it right? So suddenly they have the answers on something as subtle as psychedelic drugs? They got birth control wrong. They got abortion wrong. They got race rights wrong, women's rights wrong, gay rights wrong. Lousy foreign policy. Stupid space program. Miserable tax setup. Lousy healthcare program... and you want to hear their opinion on psychedelic drugs?

Assertions that marijuana is a gateway drug, things like that are one of the big issues that they stand on. But it's a complete red herring. There's no way you could prove that. The only way it is a gateway to hard drugs is that it's in the same schedule. Cannabis is more like aspirin than it is like crack. (Laughs)

Well, I'm not a conspiracy theorist. I don't think there's a conspiracy, but drugs, for centuries, for at least 600 years, have been enormous moneymakers for Western civilization. And by drugs I mean tea, coffee, sugar, opium. When this much money is being made I think governments are bought, or run scared. Or that it's a combination of the amounts of money that can be made and the enormous bureaucratic inertia of these agencies that are supposed to regulate all this and their corruptibility. So many people are making money off drugs that nobody can understand why it should be made legal. Pot right now in Sonoma County is \$425.00 an ounce. Should we expect barefoot freaks to come out of the hills to parade for pot to be made legalized? My god, what would happen to them if pot were legalized? It's all that stands between them and going to live under a bridge. You know, they bring up these ships from Columbia and with high-speed speedboats they take the weed off. If you're in that scene in Miami you can make four trips a night to the mothership. You are nobody, and you make \$300,000 per trip. You make \$1.2 million a night. And you are not Mr. Big, you're nobody, you're just some flunky who takes the stuff off the ship. That's the kind of money that can be made in these drug deals. And these intelligence agencies, it costs a lot of money to murder newspaper editors and set up phony political parties and pay off demonstrators and do all this shit that they do. Take a flyer on drugs. It's so transparent that governments since the middle of the 19th century have been doing this. And what's happened is social consciousness in the meantime has evolved and certain practices previously deemed OK became morally odious. Slavery, that was a drug... and then the opium trade and how that happened. So, governments have simply distanced themselves and settled for kickbacks rather than launching the ships, unloading the stuff, and banking the money they now move into the background and they use Mafias, which are nothing more than

Terence McKenna

off the books extensions of legitimate power, I think. I mean, the Mafia worked hand in hand with the U.S. Army during the invasion of Sicily. Lucky Luciano conferred with the Chief of Naval Operations on a daily basis and basically delivered Sicily to the 6th Army. Then they used the Mafia to break up the left-wing unions in Marseilles at the end of the war. So, I just think what governments can't do in the light of the day they allow Maftas to do, which they then loudly denounce, but in fact, the existence of these criminal syndicates is entirely at the pleasure of the government. That's not a conspiracy theory or even a paranoid view of things. I think that's a pretty, "I mean, of course, of course, how else?"

So basically you say there's no hope of drugs being legalized.

No, I wouldn't say that. There's a lot going on. For one thing, people's consciousness is changing. And people have finally gotten the message that the relative risks of these things they were lied to about. I think most people now know that alcohol and tobacco are the two most destructive drugs on this planet. And it puzzles them at this point, "How come then it is the way it is?" Eventually that puzzlement could turn into anger. But I would say it's 50/50 whether we'll make alcohol and tobacco illegal or legalize everything. I mean, think of the money to be made if alcohol and tobacco were made illegal.

You were saying earlier... I just want to touch on this 'cause I saw a note of mine, that salvation will probably come in the form of art.

The design process applied to human culture.

The design process applied to human culture. When you're talking about the design process, you're talking about the imaginative construction of a system which works. How do art, singing, and dancing fit into this sort of design process which is a science?

Well, the inspiration comes out of the unconscious. And so people have to put themselves in these right-brained states for this Gaian intentionality to be perceived. I mean, that's really what we're talking about.

Although you never talk about it, when you're talking about these elves singing and creating this is a concept that Australian indigenous peoples have carried within them. Native American people singing the reality into existence over and over, singing creation, and singing life. It's their database, it's their social database is this art form. But to them it's not an art, it's how they communicate, it's how they see reality.

Well, the word becoming flesh, singing it into existence. In some profound way that nobody understands, certainly I don't, we are imprisoned by our expectations, and somehow the change never happens until the expectations are deconditioned. I mean, as an example, if everyone thinks that black people and white people can't possibly have anything to do with each other, then they can't. So, the change must precede the fact.

On the same level, if you have a government that assumes the relative ignorance of its citizens, it creates an ignorant population.

You in fact make it so. You see, what happened in the 60's, the first postwar generation came of age that had been given what was then called a liberal education. When you're given a liberal education you read John Stuart Mill, Rousseau, Voltaire. What this makes you is a social critic. They said, my god, we're financing our own suicide! We don't want tens of millions of 25 year olds asking why we are not following John Stuart Mill's prescription for liberty. They said the universities must be turned into trade schools. Forget Western philosophy, art, and culture. Teach these people data entry, management skills, financial skills, and high tech. And this is what has happened. I think that the idea of universal, public liberal education was... they realized we'll all hang if we proceed along this path, and so they stopped it. And now people are given 6.5 hours of TV a day, the Brady Bunch, all this. Idiot jobs, idiot political choices, and people are completely diverted by... Michael Jordan's father's problems, baby so and so who was carried to term by a camel and a contract which is now being debated...

Are you familiar with Noam Chomsky?

Oh sure, yeah. He's an intrepid critic. I heard him on the radio the other day and it interested me. I identified with him. It's sort of hubris, I suppose.

I identify the two of you together because although you come from very diverse angles, when you come down to it, you both have the same thing to say: educate yourself, open your mind to possibilities, the only change will come through a grass-roots sort of realization.

Well, where I see us as similar is that the first love of both of us is utterly incomprehensible. In other words, I have

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An interview with

Alexander Shulgin

Interview by Scott

In this mini-interview, TRP asked Alexander Shulgin, co-author of the astounding psychedelic compendium *PIHKAL* and *TIHKAL*, his thoughts on DMT as a therapeutic substance, the popularization of ayahuasca use in the west, and what role these substances play in his spirituality, among other questions. Shulgin offers a thought-provoking look at the DMT experience, both experientially and culturally.

TRP: Let's start with a rather broad question. What sort of place does DMT play in the entheogenic pantheon? How does it fit alongside such notables as LSD, MDMA, mescaline, etc.?

AS: There is no question but that N,N-dimethyltryptamine (DMT) is one of the cornerstones of the psychedelic drug world. Not only is it one of the most widely distributed alkaloids in the plant world, but it is the structural nucleus, the parent chemical skeleton, of most of the natural and synthetic psychoactive alkaloids. The parallel to mescaline is a good one, in that mescaline provides the parent chemical skeleton for all of the phenethylamines. These two prototypes have been the inspiration for a great deal of creative synthesis.

TRP: Do you have a sense that DMT has specific uses as a psychological tool, or does it seem to you to be more of a powerhouse anomaly? Certainly few experiences compare to it, but do you see productivity there along with the intensity of the experience?

AS: In my own experience, I have found DMT to be one of the most intense and rapidly acting drugs. Probably powerhouse anomaly is closer to the mark. Part of that is certainly due to the route of administration (by smoking), and the only competitor is the equally rapid and considerably more potent 5-MeO-DMT. But I have found the actual content of the experience a bit too overwhelming. There is the rapid entry into a space that seems

to allow, at least to me, no dialogue. There may be intense colors and shapes alternating with periods of darkness which somehow seem to be much the same. There are none of the questions and answers that I hold to be the true value of the psychedelic experience. If that is what you meant by productivity, I sense that it is missing. And with the familiarity that is there after the first few experiences, the novelty too is lost.

TRP: How useful do you feel DMT might possibly be in a therapeutic setting?

AS: I do not see DMT playing a role in therapy. The value of the psychedelic drugs in this context derives in part from the communication that the patient establishes, first with his therapist and then with himself. But either interaction requires a dialogue, and none is possible when you are flat on your back being overwhelmed with imagery alternating with a lack of any input whatsoever. DMT seems to be better suited to one playing a solo role, taking an individual trip, but this is not the usual path of psychotherapy.

TRP: When you began researching the tryptamine class in earnest, did you observe any specific overall emotional changes or shifts, as opposed to when phenethylamines were more prominent in your ongoing work? Or does that kind of question not even really apply?

AS: There is a phrase that is commonly heard between people who are involved with the identification of mushrooms. There are the lumpers and the splitters. The lumpers try to combine Genera, minimize the number of categories of classification, and search for broad generalities that will bring order out of individuality. The splitters emphasize variability and difference, and often end up with almost as many pigeon holes as there are things to be pigeon-holed. In the psychedelic area I guess I started as a lumper. There were two major neurotransmitters involved in the mechanism of action of these materials: there was dopamine, which was a phenethylamine, and there was serotonin, which was a tryptamine. And almost all the known active chemicals were either phenethylamines or tryptamines. How simple. Two pigeon holes and everything can be accounted for.

I don't believe that the concept of ayahuasca has any meaning in an American city.

But the more I observed the many styles and flavors of action, the less happy I was with that simple classification. Both neurotransmitters can be involved with the action of almost any of these drugs, so those labels immediately came off. And every material had its own claim to some actions that might be shared with other materials, but not in all people. The vocabulary of descriptions continually grew. I eventually yielded to the reality that every drug is an individual, and efforts to generalize have been fruitless. The popular concept of "structure-activity relationships" depends on the explanation of potency as a function of structure and the extrapolation of observation in the areas of prediction. But the reduction of the field of so many properties down to a single one - how potent is the drug - is unfair. Potency is but one variable for classification, and in truth there are many others.

TRP: Does DMT tend to be a "favorite" among the tryptamines you've studied, or are there other tryptamines that people tend to find more interesting?

AS: I cannot say that it is a favorite of mine. Over the years I have made some effort to avoid choosing favorites, because I wished to keep my experimental field rather clear, the better to pick up suggestions of new activities in new compounds. There is always a lingering fear that repeated exposure would risk some form of tolerance, thus softening the sensitivity of observation.

TRP: Part of my curiosity about the value of DMT relates to setting. It seems impossible for most Westerners to recreate the shamanic/religious setting of traditional ayahuasca use, for example. So what could be an ideal set/setting for, say, ayahuasca use in an American city?

AS: This is a very complex question! I don't believe that the concept of *ayahuasca* has any meaning in an American city. *Ayahuasca* is popularly taken as a drink that is a mixture of harmala alkaloids and indole alkaloids. But that is the ultimate pigeon hole and it is completely inadequate. Rather than a drink, it is a concept which cannot be so simply stated. An accurate definition of *ayahuasca* must call on many variables. Let's evaluate the original *ayahuasca* scene in South America.

Who is creating it? What plants or plant parts have been chosen? How have they been prepared? How were they brought together and maybe cooked and maybe boiled down to a consumable potent? Perhaps quickly, and perhaps slowly. Every *ayahuasca* cook has a different recipe. Why is it being made? Is it for a religious experience? Possibly for a healing experience? Is it for establishing patterns of behavior and group unity or is it for allowing self exploration and individual spiritual transformation? Every occasion has a different structure. Where is it to be used? In the darkness around a central fire on the banks of a river, or in a church? Shall it be in song or in silence?

And on and on. How can this all be translated to a house in Beverly Hills? In the absence of *Psychotria viridis* (the Amazonian DMT source) perhaps we can use some *Phalaris* grass or maybe the bark of an *Acacia* tree for the needed DMT, or maybe no DMT at all but something else like mushrooms or *San Pedro* extracts. In the absence of *Banisteriopsis caapi* (the Amazonian harmala source) maybe some Syrian Rue seeds, or maybe even some clinical antidepressant that works by being a valid monoamine oxidase inhibitor. No reason to boil them together - just take a couple of capsules and turn up the volume on the music tape. This North American experience just might be a spiritual journey, or a mind altering revelation, or a body purging horror, but it is in no way an *ayahuasca* experience. It is a totally different set (the event that is expected) and a different setting (where the event takes place) and so it is a totally different experience.

TRP: This is the sort of contradiction I'm poking at. We've only really got this one term, *ayahuasca*, and its variants (*mimosahuasca*, etc.), as a kind of umbrella term for an orally active DMT experience. You knew what I meant to some degree when I used the term, but yes, the cultural overtones of the term are for the most part totally unavailable to many people, unless they've actually had this experience in the field. So we have this massive experience, a fundamental component of the shamanic traditions, suddenly being cut loose and

popularized to a degree as a sort of "renegade technology." It's as though we were handed a very complex and powerful tool, but the instruction manual that goes along with it never got translated.

AS: You are absolutely correct. The "instruction manual" for the ayahuasca experience is the native structure that defines its use. And this is in continuous transition in Brazil. What used to be a search for answers with a shaman in a jungle environment has become a religious and community interaction with the UDV and Santo Daime groups. All things change as they become assimilated into new cultures and more changes will, without doubt, take place as the ayahuasca name becomes associated with mixtures of other drugs in our own culture here.

TRP: This sort of cycles back to my question on therapeutic use; you mentioned that the experience of smoked DMT happens so fast that it's hard to process, so what about a version of the DMT experience that unfolds over several hours? Would that provide any possible therapeutic uses?

AS: Without doubt. When the oral route can be used for DMT, in the examples where its rapid metabolism is inhibited by a second material, then it bids fair to be effective as a therapeutic tool as would many other psychedelics. The onset is slower and the duration is longer. Again, it is not the identity of the drug that suggests its potential use in these areas, but rather the set that is in mind when it is used. If you seek escape via some experience, you may indeed be entertained. And if you present troubling questions, you may get answers.

TRP: You mention at one point in *TIHKAL* that you were curious about alphamethyltryptamine's possible use as an MAOI for a 'huasca combination. I found that idea very intriguing - have you heard any reports on this since *TIHKAL* was published?

AS: No I haven't. There are some complexities that are intrinsic to the idea of the 'huasca combination being the combining of an intrinsically active component that is destroyed as soon as it gets into the body with an intrinsically inactive component that does nothing but inhibit this destruction. Many of the orally active psychedelic drugs are indeed metabolized by deamination, but this process may be a minor one or a slow one. Nonetheless, the use of monoamineoxidase inhibitors may further inhibit it and thus decrease the amount of the drug needed (increasing the effective potency). Also, many of the MAOI candidates in this combination have some central activity in their own rights, and so there may be a synergism seen with the mixture. Both may contribute something to the final effects. Even more subtle is the realization that all plants are in fact mixtures of many things, and there may be drug/drug interactions that make the experience from the use of a plant very different from the observed activities

of these components when consumed in isolation.

There are those who insist that plants are the ultimate teachers and any and all psychedelic experiences should be explored only from plant use. That is the way, after all, that our original shamans used them and they knew best. But, plants are complex, and may contain compounds that are not friendly. And they are variable in composition from month to month, even from hour to hour, so how can one walk the same path twice? There are even continuous disagreements among botanists as to whether two similar plants collected in different places should have the same name. Others insist that an isolated compound, or a synthetic compound, circumvents these complications. True, there can be consistency and reproducibility, but mixtures and interactions of both components and effects are not able to be explored. There is no right answer!

TRP: On a broader note, are there parallels to be drawn in your mind between the kind of psychedelic therapy that is described in *TIHKAL* or in Myron Stolaroff's *The Secret Chief*, and the ages of shamanic use of psychoactive substances?

AS: Each of these uses its own style of medical practice. The active materials, be they mind-altering plants or chemicals, are the vehicles responsible for healing. In the shamanic school, the drug may be taken by the healer. In the Western psychotherapy school, it may be taken by the one needing healing. But in either case, its function is the same: the drug is

To me personally, the term "spiritual" has evolved over the years into the word "wonderment".

used as an instructive tool for analysis and insight.

TRP: Are you familiar with the work of the Council on Spiritual Practices (www.csp.org)? Do you have any thoughts on their work? I'm particularly interested in how their notion of "spiritual guide" seems to have resonance with the notion of "shaman" without having any particular religious overtones of its own.

AS: I am quite familiar with the CSP and would like to support it in any way I can. There is much talk of the use of psychedelic drugs as the means of understanding the body or the mind, but these views seem to always suggest that the drugs do things. More delicate are their roles as catalysts that allow things to be realized, things that may already be in the person's reality but

not recognized or appreciated. Here can be the gracious realization that there is something of the divine in each of us. This is the spiritual side of our psyches, always present but now revealed in some remarkable way. This is the concept behind the alternate name that has been used, entheogens. And this realization need not require a drug — it can come from any of a number of processes as varied as meditation or falling in love. But the opening of that part of the inner person is of ultimate importance, and the CSP is committed to exploring this process.

TRP: Do you personally have any identification with the term "spiritual" as it relates to these substances?

AS: To me personally, the term "spiritual" has evolved over the years into the word "wonderment." I am continuously surprised and amazed in the discovery of what is clearly present in the human mind but simply not available. My exploration of psychedelic drugs, not just the known ones such as DMT and mescaline, but newly created ones as well, is motivated by the excitement of discovery. New drugs may serve as models for new tools for research, or for new medicines to treat our illnesses. But to me the reward is the finding of them, not the use of them. In that sense, perhaps the profound joy I feel in this search is indeed a form of spirituality. I-1

Mimosahuasca Field Report 1 Continued...

at that point, i was bursting with love too. i would think of a person, and my feelings of goodwill toward them would be totally amplified beyond all measure. words poured out of me, and buddy and snow were riffing right there with me, and we seemed to be having an absolutely good time. snow told me later that occasionally she and buddy would look at each other and giggle at how far out i was; but in general, it was a remarkably good time.

i've had episodes like that before, on acid in particular. it's a big part of why i don't take acid anymore. acid makes me delusional in a serious way, and i can't contextualize it. so here i was, getting that experience handed to me on the biggest platter possible. i now have an interpretation. the mimosahuasca made it absolutely possible to explore the proposition "anything is possible." anything is possible, i suppose, but within constraints. well, those constraints began to evaporate in my mind, and i began to follow every last errant notion to its ultimate conclusion. yes, i could make love to that person and that person and that person, yes, i could make art with that person and that person and that person, yes, i could quit my job and be free and do exactly what i wanted to, and soon, reality itself would be transfigured and we would all live in peace and harmony and the network would just hum and happiness would inherently ensue. that's the place i was in. i saw no chinks in that armor. everything was flat out as cool as it fucking gets. holy fucking shit, i was out there.

buddy and snow eventually went to bed. i couldn't sleep. i was hammered with experience, still wide awake. i got up and went to

the bathroom, swimming through reality to get there. i was still, basically, aware that life was going to be different from that night forward, i only had to wait. at one point i considered making a towel levitate across the room to me, then decided against it. and at that moment, the house of cards started to slip. i sat for a long time, trying to piece together what had happened to me. i heard an enormous loud sound from outside, and i realized that the universe was sending me a signal. it was, phenomenologically, an enormous loud booming sound that i believed i had never heard before. i briefly wondered if the world was ending. then it went away, and i took that as a sign.

i went upstairs to the guest bedroom, tucked myself in, and tried to sleep.

i couldn't sleep.

the pendulum was now swinging to the other extreme. this too was familiar from my acid trips, the moment where you realize you've been behaving like a madman and actually you aren't going to witness any fantastic changes the next day, other than a change in how embarrassed you're going to feel.

the pendulum completed its swing. i don't know how to explain it, other to say "complete suicidal despair".

and that night, in order to understand simple concepts like "balance", the mimosahuasca plunged me into the depths. i couldn't think of a single reason to continue living, if all of those fantastic "possibilities" of the night before could just up and slip away so fucking easily. the inherent meaninglessness of life was not seen as it usually is to me, a "liberating" thing, but instead a horrible thing, an awful thing, a deadly thing. i would spend my life churning out more "product", more "dross" to clutter up the planet with, and then i would die, and it would not matter, and even when i'm sober i often feel that way, but i was really feeling all the ramifications, and i was disturbed, and frightened, and the experience was relentless. i was not going to be let off the hook.

it was one of the more uncomfortable hours i've spent as a person, but that's almost irrelevant.

the next day, i awoke with a stiff headache, which lasted all day. file under "body load, 24g."

recovery.

well, let me say, i don't regret that experience at all. i continued to learn some lessons, lessons that previous mimosahuasca experience had begun to teach. in particular, i have always had a fixation with notions of "rich and famous". i have been engaged for years now in an attempt to get at the root of my desire, since childhood, to "be rich and famous", and kind of purge those feelings. i don't like them; i think they're unhealthy, they stem from me being a big fish in a small pond from the time i was 11 all through high school, getting cast in whatever play i wanted, and being well regarded to the point where egotism was a serious problem. drugs amplify what's within you, is one model to consider, and drugs, acid in particular, relentlessly amplify my need to be rich and famous. mimosahuasca is helping me become aware of this in a more direct way than ever before, continuing work that i'd started on zcb in the last couple years. in addition, my pseudo-nihilism or uncomfortable-

agnosticism is something that I will always be faced with in these experiences. each time I go that deep, I find myself rattled to the core that that's who I am instead of some other me. no amount of preparation in advance, for me in particular, will stave off that confrontation, or cast it in a more pleasant light; for me, it'll always be rough like that, and I'm learning how to deal with it. I guess as I get older and certain other things start to come into focus for me.

the loud booming sound that I couldn't recognize? I heard it the next morning as I awoke. Just an airplane, not a sign from the universe.

Mimosahuasca Field Report 2 Continued...

Well, Jhno is a definite channel for something, that's for sure. Also, I was blown away by the fact that this experience — the trip, the education lesson, and the inspiration for the music that unlocked it all in my mind — came from a shrub — *Peganum harmala* and *Mimosa hostilis*.

It was at this moment that I began to see images of my familiar trip-channel — the Joker, the Jester, the Harlequin, the Riddler, the Fool, Loki the quick, lord of wit, master of riddles. This Joker spirit lives in this DMT world — he is undeniably a presence — swimming with flashing question marks, devilish grins, and hysterical laughter. He shuffles the deck of time and space, throwing his wild-card into the mix wherever wit and whimsy strike. Well, let me tell you, DMT is the Wild Card in this deck, and goddamn if it isn't cleverly disguised as a shrub! How bizarre!

I was honored to once again hold audience with this slippery spirit. He confided in me (in very conspiratorial tones, of course) that I was one of his favorite puzzle-solvers. Those weren't the words he used (they weren't even really words) but the tone of his message was that I (me?) was one of his favorite wisdom-unravellers in a long line of wisdom-unravellers. He explained to me that the universe is packed dense with wisdom — hidden away in every little nook and crevice you can find. The key to unlocking it is by exploring all the little bits and pieces and putting them all together in the right way at the right time. He said that I (me?) had a gift for seeing things in a uniquely holistic way, and that my abilities would allow me (me?) to one day be a great leader — if that was indeed what I wanted to do. At this point he said that that was all he had to teach me, and that the rest was easy if I just kept working at it. Then he left, leaving me with about two hours of homework to do.

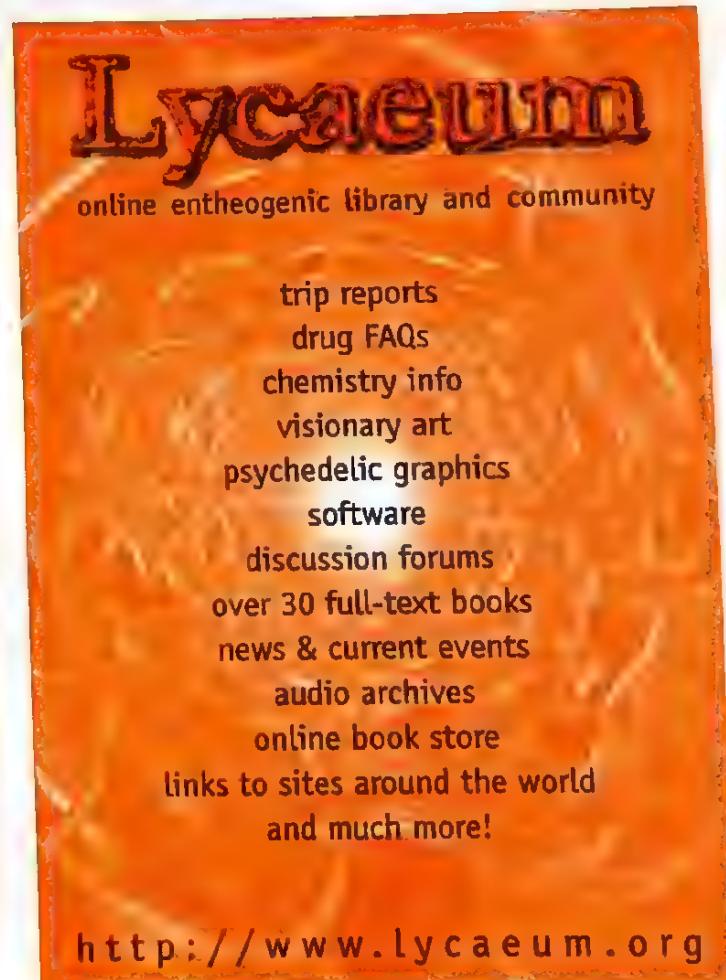
First, I had wave after wave of famous thinkers and leaders pour through my consciousness. I had a hall of Einsteins and Aristotles and Solomons — all men, all hunched over their desks or workplaces, transcribing elaborate notes or puzzling over some unsolved problem, heads and shoulders heavy with the responsibilities and burdens of wisdom and leadership. In one sense I was awed and honored to walk down this hall, but another part of me was saying "Screw this! Why do I need that kind of stress and pressure? Being a leader sucks."

I wrestled with this issue for most of the rest of the trip. I was shown that I had lived many different lives in preparation for this one, and that big things were lining up for me. I was told that if I chose to ignore the signs then many lifetimes of work would be wasted. I was also told that in the grand scheme of things none of it really mattered anyway, and that this life was mine to do with what I wanted — if I only knew what that was. I eventually reached a point where I found my consciousness was slipping in and out of my body through my breath, and that I could simply slip away and visit

some other time and/or place if I wanted, but I had experienced enough and needed to do some real world thinking for a while.

I curled up on the couch and began to get the feeling like I was beginning to come down. As I sat there, little mischievous elves began landing on me like falling leaves. They would drop on me out of the air and say things like, "You ignore people's feelings. Hah!" And I would moan in pain because Yes, it is true. Another one would drop on me and say, "You have trouble telling people you care about them. Hah!" And I would flinch and moan. Yes, it was true. This went on for about another 30 minutes. My personal garbage was laid out, for me like a roll of film, and all my shortcomings as a human being were painted into technicolor detail. I found myself thinking thoughts like, "So that's how so-and-so remembers me? From that one stupid conversation we had years ago? No. Really? That's how they see me? Good god!" Hundreds of reflections of myself as captured through other people's eyes poured themselves into my consciousness. Wow! Talk about invasive loss of relativity! I had no idea so many people had so many viewpoints of me. Even people I didn't really know, but who somehow knew me. Wow. Heavy.

Anyway, by this point I was pretty much down, but I felt great! When I was totally down (around 3:00 a.m.) I ate the dinner I had fixed for myself (I was starved!) and then went to bed shortly thereafter. All in all it was a wonderful time. I felt safe and well guided the whole time, and learned a shitload about myself and the way of the world in general. I'm so thrilled that a new reliable source-plant for this kind of experimentation has been found, and I could just give Jonathan Ott a big fat hug. [-]



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INSIDE THE ENTHEOGEN REVIEW

AN INTERVIEW WITH NEW ER CO-EDITOR DAVID AARDVARK

BY WILL BEIFUSS



Will Beifuss: How did you come to get involved with ER and were you involved with the publication before taking it over?

David Aardvark: Well, *The Entheogen Review* was always one of my favorite reads. I subscribed to it fairly early on, and it has been quite interesting to see the developments in this area. ER is a unique publication, in that it is written - to a large extent - by the psychonauts who are experimenting with ayahuasca analogues and fairly obscure plants such as *Salvia divinorum*, *Calea zachatechichi*, *Stipa robusta*, *Lepiotahumel*, and others. To my knowledge, there hasn't ever been any previous journal that covered the "nuts & bolts" of how to prepare these plants, what the proper dosages are, what the inherent dangers of consuming these plants might be, and - most interesting - what the effects of these plants are.

I first met ER's founding editor Jim DeKorne in 1994 at the Gathering of the Minds conference. I had just finishing reading his book *Psychedelic Shamanism*, and I was impressed with his conceptualization of the "imaginal realm." After this meeting, I started corresponding with Jim, and a few of these letters were eventually printed in ER. So my initial involvement in ER was as an enthusiastic subscriber, and then later, as an occasional anonymous contributor.

Why did Jim DeKorne quit publishing ER? Was it offered to you by DeKorne or did you lobby him over a period of time for it?

We first discussed the possibility of Jim "passing the torch" of ER at the 1997 Telluride Mushroom Festival. Jim was about to go public with the news that he had decided to stop publishing ER with the Winter 1997 issue. The publication no longer had enough subscribers to make it financially feasible to continue. As well, Jim had burned out on publishing; six years is a long time for someone to single-handedly produce a quarterly publication. Jim's own "inner work" had been moving away from entheogen use for some time, and I think that his enthusiasm was waning. As well, Jim's travels to other countries provided him with experiences that left him increasingly disillusioned with the direction that America seems to be moving in. Indeed, Jim recently moved to Budapest.

At Telluride, I offered to take over ER, and to fulfill all of the subscriptions that were currently left incomplete - some people had paid for several years in advance. Jim was glad to see ER continue, and happy that he wouldn't have to be refunding anyone's money! It worked out well for both of us. Prior to my first issue, I brought in K. Trout as the technical editor of the publication, since he was well-suited for this position.

Speaking of your technical editor K. Trout, what is his background in this field? Has he worked on other publications and what other writing has he done?

Trout's formal education is in chemistry. I am particularly thankful to have him onboard with ER because of this, as I know little about chemistry. Trout has been writing on the topic of entheogens for many years, compiling his "Trout's Notes," which can be best described as critiques, collections, and condensations of references on the current state of the literature on entheogens. As well, his expansive personal experience with visionary plants and drugs is invaluable. Perhaps the most well-circulated publication that Trout has written is his *Sacred Cacti and Some Selected Succulents: Botany, Chemistry, Cultivation, and Utilization*, which is an extensive overview of psychoactive and purportedly psychoactive cacti.

ER has gone through some changes under your watch, most notably a more scholarly, academic approach to the subject matter. Is this something you perceived the readership wanted or does it reflect your own personal tastes?

It probably reflects my own tastes. Nevertheless, we have received numerous letters lauding the new spin that we've put on ER. On seeing the first issue, Jonathan Ott commented that he thought ER was "immeasurably improved over its prior incarnation." That was quite nice to hear. As far as an example that I looked to for inspiration regarding the "more scholarly approach," as you call it, I was mainly influenced by the Italian journal *Eleusis*. This is an excellent publication that takes an entirely scholarly approach towards the study of entheogens. It is one of my favorite reads, and to an extent I wanted to incorporate this manner of addressing the topic.

However, I didn't want ER to take an overly scholarly approach. ER remains a journal largely produced by its subscribers, and I like this fact. The "hyperspatial maps," or "trip reports," are what keeps ER real. Sharing these experiences is an important manner in which readers can learn potential ways to navigate the mental spaces that entheogens can produce, and use them to their advantage.

Do you have any other writing projects you are considering, or has ER turned out to be more work than you anticipated?

Well, ER has certainly turned out to be more work than I anticipated! When we took over ER, we had less than 200 subscribers, most of whom had already paid DeKorne for their subscriptions. So I had to work very hard to build the subscription-base back up. We now have over 500 subscribers, and are doing okay financially, but I am hopeful that we can eventually build the subscriber base to 2000+, which seems to

me to be a reasonable goal.

One of the main drawbacks is that people feel that they can get any information that they want over the Internet. The Internet is another reason that we decided to give ER a more scholarly spin. When one reads something on the Internet, there are rarely any bibliographic citations to back up the information provided. The Internet is a seething cauldron of misinformation

**THERE ARE THOSE
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THE EXPERIENCE
IS SO STRANGE
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THANK YOU."**

As far as other projects go, I've recently completed *Salvia divinorum and Salvinorin A - The Best of The Entheogen Review, 1992-1998*. This book not only brings together everything that has ever appeared in the pages of ER about *Salvia divinorum* and *salvinorin A*, but it also includes new commentary, an annotated bibliography of relevant texts, videos, and audio

cassettes for further study, an annotated compilation of Internet-related resources, and a current source list and price comparison for nearly every known company that sells *Salvia divinorum* plants, leaf, and extracts. The interesting thing about this compilation is that it relates what was known about *Salvia divinorum* in a historic manner, starting from the time when people didn't really know how to ingest the plant properly, and were reporting no effects!

What do you think the future legal status of *Salvia divinorum* will be? Any thoughts on how best for the community to insure its continued legality?

It's hard to say. There are those who postulate that *Salvia divinorum* will never become popular enough to warrant it being made illegal. The experience produced by this plant is frequently reported to be so bizarre that, "one try is enough, thank you." Many people in the entheogenic community feel that *Salvia divinorum* will continue to be treated in the same manner as the *Datura* species and *Amanita* species are. These plants appear to be ignored by the law simply because the plants themselves seem to legislate "restricted use."

On the other hand, I've heard that the manufacturer of "Herbal Ecstasy" has taken an interest in *Salvia divinorum*, and plans to mass-market it. This abhorrently unenlightened approach could spell doom for the plant. Advertising of this sort could convince the "club" crowd that *S. divinorum* is just another "recreational" drug, similar to MDMA or Cannabis. If this happens, casualties may abound. *S. divinorum* can cause people to get up and move about erratically, without any idea of what they're doing in our reality. In this condition, people can quickly become a danger to themselves and others. It is always best to have a "sitter" present when one uses this plant. Mass-market *S. divinorum* to the club scene, and all it will take is a couple of accidents for the media to step in and demonize it. Look what happened with GHB. Overdoses on "liquid ecstasy" (GHB) were recently featured on a late-night mainstream TV drama. GHB has now become the target of fictionalized anti-drug hype, as well as the horseshit spread by the "news" media.

I noticed in the Autumnal Equinox issue of ER, in an article on cacti, you wanted to test the validity of a statement made by Peter Stafford that peyote is psychoactive when smoked, so you smoked 650 mg of dried San Pedro cactus. I admire this willingness on the part of an editor to bioassay a substance to get the facts straight for an article. Are there other plants/compounds that are rumored to be psychoactive that you plan on ingesting and reporting on in future issues?

Well, my test was actually in regard to a correspondent's claim that *Trichocereus pachanoi* was active when smoked. I included the quote from Stafford for two reasons. First, it was something

in print that implied that mescaline in cacti was active when smoked. Second, it illustrated the fact that what most people are actually doing is smoking a combination of mescaline-containing cacti and Cannabis. My feeling on this is that it is very unlikely that the tiny amount of mescaline present in whatever cactus was smoked could possibly have any psychoactive effects. Consume mescaline orally, and the average dose is 400-500 mg. That's a lot of material, and it's a hell of a lot more than is going to be present in any cacti that someone smokes. So my conclusion was simply that any effects caused by cacti smoked with Cannabis are likely due to the Cannabis, and not due to any mescaline that may be present. K. Trout has also smoked peyote, peyote tar, and isolated mescaline crystals, without having any psychoactive effects.

Trout doesn't shy away from bioassays either, to test out the purported activity of botanicals. We got an exciting letter from a subscriber in Japan that was published in the Summer Solstice issue, which related information about possible ibogaine-like activity from *Voacanga africana* seeds. After researching potential toxicity issues (which were presented in this issue of ER in tabular form), Trout bioassayed the same number of seeds as the correspondent used. The effects that he experienced were minimal, but they presented hints that a larger dose might provide an interesting entheogenic experience. The strange thing is that, according to the literature, these seeds should not be active at such low doses. There is nothing reported that shows that they are likely to have an alkaloid content high enough to support an entheogenic effect at these doses. Still, the alkaloid content of plants is variable, and it is possible that the correspondent had stronger seeds. Just as an example, a batch of *Anadenanthera colubrina* seeds recently tested out at 12.4% bufotenine! This is an unbelievably high amount of alkaloid for any plant to have. So it can happen. Obviously more work needs to be done on *V. africana* seeds, but in a very careful manner. Some of the alkaloids in *V. africana* are cardiac stimulants, which could be dangerous in large amounts. We try to make sure that we always point out any potential dangers to those who might choose to experiment with putative entheogens. The "let's swallow a handful of seeds and see what happens" mentality so often found on the Internet just doesn't cut it.

I realize that I haven't really answered your question. As far as plants that I am personally interested in trying out, I would have to say that I have always been intrigued by the "lesser known" plants. *Lagochilusinebrians* is intriguing - I've made several half-hearted attempts to track this plant down, but it doesn't seem to be available commercially. A diterpenoid compound was isolated from it in the late '50s, which may be psychoactive, perhaps even similar in action to salvinorin A. It's an unknown at this point. I've always been fascinated by the reported activity of *Mitragyna speciosa*, but a source for the plant seems to be lacking in this case too. It has been used as an opium substitute in Asia. However, *M. speciosa* is really

an enigma. It has been reported independently as a stimulant and as a depressant, and it contains at least 22 alkaloids, many of which are indoles. The main alkaloid present, mitragynine, is a 4-substituted indole (similar to psilocybin and ergine), so it has been postulated that *M. speciosa* may also have visionary effects! Another plant that intrigues me is *Mesembryanthemum tortuosum* (also known as *Sceletium tortuosum*). It has been reported to have been used as an inebriant by the Hottentots and is supposed to have euphoric effects. Actually, Will, I have your "Sources" column in ER to thank for locating source material for this plant, which for a long time seemed unavailable. As well as listing Sacred Succulents as a seed source, and Botanic Art in the Netherlands as a plant source, you also recently mentioned to me that dried herb is now available from OM-CHI Herbs, where you live in Oregon, right?

I believe so. Are there additional changes you want to make in ER in the future, or any other regular features you hope to incorporate?

I'd like to have at least one interview per issue, but this isn't always easy to arrange. I'm also considering the inclusion of a visionary plants gardening feature that would be written for each issue by a different guest columnist. A number of subscribers have written in to say that they would like to see more provided on how people actually use entheogens to better

their lives. Not just "trip reports," but rather explanations of methods or patterns of use that provide beneficial effects in real-world situations. I agree that these types of articles would be valuable. But to an extent, we can only work with what we are given. If people aren't sending in this sort of information, it is hard for us to include it. Unfortunately, since most of my time is spent editing, filling orders, and dealing with correspondence, I don't have the time to write as much as I would like on this and other topics. But I certainly encourage anyone who has something to say on these matters to share!

I think you are doing a fantastic job with ER. Best of luck to you in the future. [1]

The Entheogen Review is only available by subscription: \$25 (USA), \$35 (foreign) for one year (four issues). Cash, check or money order made out to The Entheogen Review should be sent to: The Entheogen Review, 564 Mission Street, Box 808-T, San Francisco, CA, 94105-2918. A limited supply of back-issues are available. Send a 10 self-addressed stamped envelope for their current catalog.

Will Beifuss is a free lance writer who co-authors the "Sources" column in *The Entheogen Review*.

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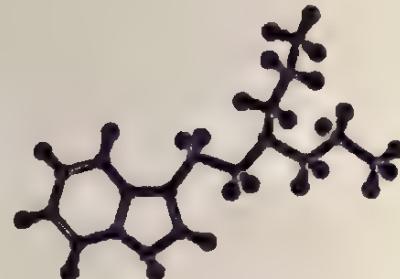
Jhno — *kwno*
1998 NEWdOG Records



Spool — *Spool*

San Francisco-based ambient artist Jhno is back with two new releases: *kwno*, a solo followup to his 1995 album *understand*, and *Spool*, a new collaboration with guitarist John Ridenour. *kwno* is a thick organic stew of sound, seven tracks that use churning drum and bass rhythms and clanging, clapping and pounding percussion to lay a foundation down for some rather chunky musical exploration. "Drum And Java" is a rollicking and noisy soundscape, a piece that never precisely builds to a climax but somehow manages to cycle through any number of intriguing beats and tribal percussion swirls. "Morph" establishes a bizarre and funky groove space with walls and waves of sound rippling all over the place, and just when you think it's gotten as weird as it could possibly get, it evolves into something still weirder. "k2kcbk" is the most experimental track, featuring a chunky rhythm, strange noises and mechanical sounds hardwired into the loop, with some Peter Gabriel percussion sampled in for good measure. Then a remix of a Ridenour track "Little Yellow Car" appears; in the midst of this wild tour through a complex ambient forest, smooth guitar and dreamy vocals suddenly pop in, accompanied by the ever present drum and bass riff which manages to sneak its way in underneath. It's a very nice moment, and the album is quite a treat.

Spool, meanwhile, features Jhno and Ridenour taking single hooks, and then evolving the hell out of them, through all kinds of ambient swirling and pulsing without ever losing that one initial riff. The formula works like a charm on such tracks as: "ebo", a miraculous 15-minute evolving iterative space; "algo", a cute little tune that builds up its lazy afternoon swank into an ultimately eerie rub; "joni", a looming, ethereal track that is the album's high point; "y", a long, luscious sea of lilting guitar and smooth sonic beds; and "3", hypnotic, meandering guitar and piano, by far the best example of the proverbial endless riff. The album is exquisite and flavorful, a smooth contrast to the dense exploration of *kwno*. Both albums are well worth repeated listenings. —Scotto



DPT ($C_{16}H_{24}N_2$) ☀

Exotic Substance Review
DPT (N,N-Dipropyltryptamine)

TIHKAL provides us with one account of a 250 mg oral DPT experience that begins with, "I was seeing the Light real strongly." Unfortunately, the same amount provided this reviewer with an entirely unimpressive experience. When faced with a disappointing experiment like that, my companion and I decided to try another route, a route of administration not mentioned at all in *TIHKAL*. 200 mg of DPT was insufflated on an empty stomach, and that proved to be a direct route into a thoroughly unusual psychedelic space, unlike any other psychedelic I've tried. It came on within a half hour, and for a solid hour or so, the eyes-closed visuals were extremely bizarre, a wild wash of images that proved relentlessly intriguing and impossible to understand. Music was thoroughly enhanced, to an almost awesome degree. During the first hour, I found myself chuckling at how impossible it was to understand what the hell was happening to me, but this trance state was easily escaped by simply opening my eyes, which I chose not to do, for the most part. The second hour allowed me to project my own thoughts and explorations into the space, and more than once, provocative images came back to me and exciting twists and turns were possible. The space was not overwhelming to me; I had to stay actively involved in playing with the sensations.

I found the experience to be intriguing and unusual. The "flash", if you can call it that, was not at all an intense barrage of "content"; rather the psychoactivity focused around a severely altered aesthetic sensibility more than anything else. I experienced no noticeable body load whatsoever and was able to sleep easily at the four hour mark; a companion vomited several times, due to what he described as psychological issues relating to the smell of the compound. His experience at the same dosage seemed much more intense than mine; in future trials, he believes he would try less, whereas I believe I would try more. Intramuscular administration is providing interesting results elsewhere. This is just another data point in the flow; as always, your mileage may vary. —Scotto



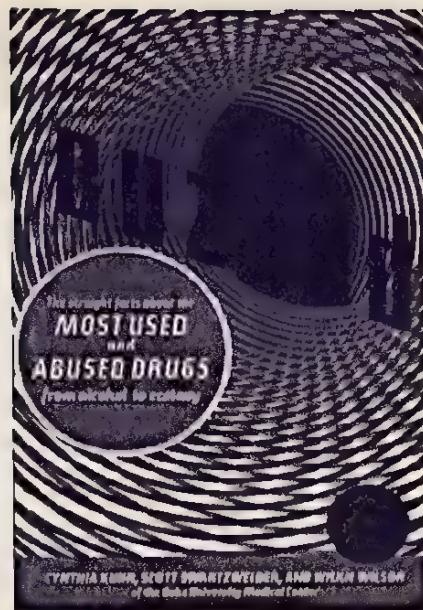
Tony Millionaire - *Sock Monkey*
Dark Horse Comics 1998

Drop what you are doing and purchase issue #1 of *Sock Monkey* by Tony Millionaire of *Maakie*'s fame. In the new *Sock Monkey*, which is named for a monkey made of a sock, we find Millionaire's talents have fully ripened- rivaling even the pen of his primary influence, Windsor McKay, creator of the infamous *Nemo's Adventures in Slumberland*.

The premiere issue of *Sock Monkey* has Uncle Gabby (the sock monkey) discovering a chandelier floating above-head in his home. Assuming this "succulent, starry palace" is heaven, he enlists the aid of his best friend, Drinky the Crow, to help him. Hindered only by the Crow's constant state of enlivenment, the two set off on a most transcendental errand. Without revealing too much of the plot, I will have you know that the duo become pestered by a pug, thanked by ants, and mocked by crows which are not drunk.

Fans of "modern underground comix" take heed — this is some serious shit. Millionaire treads upon delicate grounds which make Chris Ware and his "smart boy" appear positively prude. The mastery of ink which Millionaire displays puts Robert Crumb's chicken-scratches to shame. The debut issue of *Sock Monkey* is sure to become a collector's item. However, in the world of comic books, not every issue goes up in value — some go down. If the \$3 spent on *Sock Monkey* fail to delight you, you probably have no soul. Number 2 is now also available.

You will recall my prediction in 1982 that one of the Jackson 5 would reach stellar fame by 1985; you will recall my claiming (amidst a din of mockery!) that the "Macarena" would sweep the world; I even correctly identified Milli Vanilli as imposters a month before the popular media; so do not do yourself the disservice of ignoring this statement: if you read *Sock Monkey*, you will go to heaven. *Sock Monkey* gets 5 out of 4 stars on the mantid chart of drunken-crow retro-victorian pen and ink funny-book quality.
—mantid



Drs. Cynthia Kuhn, Scott Swartwelder and Wilkie Wilson

Buzzed

Norton Press, 1998; 266 pgs

In this highly cautious, encyclopedic tour through the current drugscape, the medical staff of Duke University, as well as a couple maudlin student advisors, put forth a reasonably well researched, if unadventurous and incurious book. It is touted by author Irving Welsh on the blurb as highly readable, meaning easily accessible to novices like politicians and prepubescents. And it is: every college freshman should be more familiar with the contents of *Buzzed* than a pamphlet from the Partnership For a Drug Free America.

Still, it was too schoolmarmish for my taste. The authors write: "The Hallucinogens should be divided into two groups, the ones that cause psychological problems—the LSD-like drugs and the much more physically dangerous belladonna and PCP-like compounds." One gets the feeling they don't want the reader messing with these substances, which was a turn-off for me. The only pictures in *Buzzed* were from the DEA archives; one showed a giant cannabis colon with the subtitle, "Marijuana abusers prefer the colas, or buds of the plant, because of their higher THC content." Apparently, non-abusers prefer the stems.

I found the basics of the book standard and informed enough. In this day and age, with juggernaut organizations like the P.D.F.A. spewing out Big Lies like lethal factory waste, one takes the reasonable info one can get — even applauds with every decent drug book on the market. Add to this a positive outlook on marijuana legalization, a lengthy and amusing glossary of drug slang (why is it PCP and LSD have so many names?), as well as sections on basic brain function and legal tips, you have a fairly good book. *Buzzed* gets a C+. —Evis Revbus

Experiments in Primal House

By DJ Axis

Two, elements, integral it seems, to the very dynamics with which the universe presents this life to us...

House music can metaphorically be likened to psychedelic mushrooms: They are both highly trippy. Like mushrooms, house music started underground and grew amidst a lot of shit (the mid-eighties). Also like mushrooms, the house music you buy at stores usually "doesn't work". They are definitely both better with dim lights and some pot. But more striking than any of these similarities is the notion that like mushrooms, house music is a powerful tool for introspection and expression if used properly. It's no wonder that both have both played major roles in each other's existence.

House music is not original. In fact, it's just a manifestation of one of the oldest traditions of human history – celebrating the arts of rhythm and movement for ritual and ecstatic purposes. Getting the community together and dancing all night long is one of the most primal rituals of almost all societies throughout history. In many cultures throughout history, visionary plants were consumed as part of this ritualistic behavior. Although it is nearly impossible to neatly define house music or house culture – as is usually the case with any underground cultural movement – there exist obvious commonalities between what people are doing right now with house music and what our ancient ancestors practiced so long ago. Major themes are certainly present: social gatherings lasting all night; a space which encourage the expression of the body through dance...

Idealistically, the encouragement to dance comes from how good the music sounds (though getting high doesn't hurt), and the music

is brought to the people via the DJ. The DJ is a highly esteemed and respected figure in the house community, entrusted to playing other people's music with as much skill and creativity as possible. By mixing records – taking two songs on two records and matching their speeds on two different turntables – it becomes possible to not only keep a nonstop groove going all night, but the DJ can also play two different songs at once. The multi-sound layering of simultaneous rhythms and melodies creates a new composition woven together by the strength of each song's individual elements. This layering technique is essential to the true power of house music.

House is not about the hook. It's musical hypnosis occurs only after long term exposure to high doses. Real house cannot be enjoyed until a lot of attention has been paid to it. A really satisfying house groove is usually the result of a constant (yet gradual) building of psychic energy, culminating in a "peak experience" for the audience. The DJ's job is to set the arc of that rising peak, and to set it off with a fury and intensity that is utterly mind-blowing. Did I say mind-blowing? Yes, that's what I meant? Mind-blowing.

And, like mushrooms, the whole point of partaking in house music is to celebrate life. With house the common ground is laid down – a dance floor for people to have a good time and express themselves in an open social atmosphere. That is the setting. And, like mushrooms, house music can deepen your awareness and help build powerful bonds between people. That is the set. The dosage is up to you.

R E C E N T G R O O V Y M U S I C

Eric Davenport

Aggressive House

Just weeks ago I had got into a good friend's car and asked him what we were listening to. "An Eric Davenport mixtape called *Progressive House*," he replied. *Progressive House*, huh? I would never expect Mr. Davenport to trade in his tough funky style for the likes of the cheesy synthesizer overdose sound known as progressive house. I sat and listened in my state of shock, only to be refreshingly exposed to a heavy old school acid house groove. Suddenly, disco bass lines tore through the aural foreground and laid down the funk. "It's messed up that he called this *Progressive House*," I thought aloud. My correction was met over the arrival of furious tribal drums storming into the mix as my friend said, "It's *Aggressive House*." The genius behind the word play sank deep as I sat corrected, entrenched in the pounding grooves as they beat their way into my brain. When it was over, it demanded to be played again, which I was thankful for. Very impressive, Mr. Davenport, *Aggressive House* indeed.

Terry Mullan - speaker phreaker

Smile Communications

Chicago's Terry Mullan has a deep love for music – it's apparent in the power of what he plays. At his fiercest, his sound is a psychedelic deluge; a tidal wave of acid lines and raw bangin' beats. It is absolutely mind blowing to watch the effect this DJ can have on a live audience – people literally rise up off of the floor, screaming. At the same time, he always has the ability to bring the groove down and play soulful, sensual tunes in his sets. All of this is nicely exemplified on *Speaker Phreaker*. It starts off with the kinetic rush of a charging

train, builds into a driving roar of erupting bass, and finally dives deep into beautiful jazzy mellowness. Brilliant programming, tight mechanics, and an impeccable selection of music including an exclusive track written by the man himself. <http://www.smilecomm.com>.

Aquarius Recordings - A Retrospective

Aquarius - A division of Stickman Records

This immaculate double 12" LP throws down a nice selection from one of Canada's finest house music label. While noticeable for the funky retro pictures adorning their singles, Aquarius is most recognized for its stone soul groove. It's a heavy, trippy sound equally laced with chunky distortion and addictive samples. Feel the deepness through tracks by the likes of Back Door Revelations, Soul Grabber, and Happy Days. <http://www.stickmanrecords.com>.

Cardigans - Gran Turismo

stockholm / Mercury Records

I once walked around high on LSD, with a pair of headphones playing The Cardigans album *Life*. *Life* is pure pop brilliance, it's gentle, cute and yet dynamic vibe kept me tripping on good feelings while my initial mood was bad (a little case of the heartache). It was comforting music to have with me that evening. Years have passed and now it seems, the band has become a lot more cynical. Their latest release, *Gran Turismo*, trades in their lovesick poppy cuteness for lovesick poppy darkness. This album is heavy, etched in brooding guitars, grinding organ lines and lots of distortion. Hell, if I was listening to *Gran Turismo* on that fateful night, I might have had a bad trip. <http://www.mercuryrecords.com/mercury>



Various artists — *Bliss*
1998 Real World Records

Bliss is described in its liner notes as "A tranquil journey into the Real World — mesmerizing and beautiful chill-out music." They ain't kidding. The premise is to take thirteen tracks from existing Real World releases, and weave them together into a seamless "ambient" tapestry. Whether you're already very familiar with the artists in question, or looking for an introduction into Real World's style of modern world music, this album is not your average compilation. It's indeed a journey, featuring such renowned artists as Peter Gabriel (providing a track from his seminal *Passion*), Nusrat Fateh Ali Khan, Sheila Chandra (both solo, and in a mesmerizing collaboration with The Grid entitled "Angel Tech"), Ayub Ogada, and U. Srinivas and Michael Brook, along side lesser known treasures from the Real World vaults, including the Tsinandali Choir (a polyphonic men's chorus from Georgia), Jam Nation (an eclectic improvisational world-funk ensemble), the Afro Celt Sound System's wrenching "Inion", a sublime track by Sarmila Roy from Peter Brook's *The Mahabharata*, the Guo Brothers and Shung Tian's beautiful "Soldiers of the Long March," and more. Each track is mixed directly into the next, though the original tracks themselves have not been "sweetened" with "ambient beats" by any stretch. It's just a solid hour of riveting performances, one rippling into the next. This compendium is not to be missed. —Scotto

Toy Reviews

The Hoberman Sphere

First encounters with the Hoberman Sphere have effects on the brain similar to those of first discovery of The Other. You may want to know more about it, aside from admiration of the pretty shapes and colors. The sphere is a transformative object, proof by sight of complexities inherent in the relationship between a whole and its parts. This immanent manifestation looks remarkably like a nine-inch spiky ball which morphs synergetically into a 30-inch geodesic icosadodecahedron, all within your hands.

Engineer Chuck Hoberman has invented a truly rewarding consumer product for contemplators of creativity. The Hoberman Sphere can be purchased from Hoberman Associates Fine Folding Products: <http://www.hoberman.com/fold/index.html>. —snow

Kaleidovision

The process works like this: take two kaleidoscopes, the kind with clear balls at the end, and put them up to your eyes. Then, sit about a foot away from a television screen displaying only static. Slowly lean towards the TV until the ends of the kaleidoscopes touch the screen. The reflected fuzz goes from black

and white to RGB in a way that will definitely amuse any connoisseur of eye candy. —fara forest

Foam

Foam is a substance created by Nickelodian that is a mixture of very tiny styrofoam balls and a space-age polymer goop. It comes in various pleasing colors, although only one nasty smell. Foam is best employed in trip party situations where you can hand your friends this malleable substance. They have a grand time squishing, squeezing, and molding, and you get to find out more about their psyches when you see what shapes come forth from their hands while they are focused on a strange psychedelic conversation. —fara forest

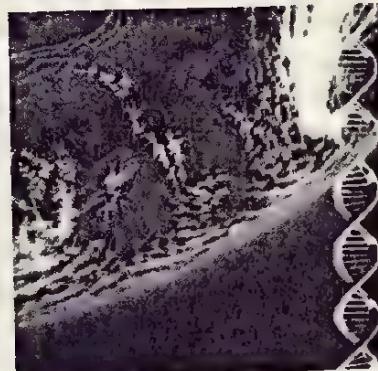
Fidget

This toy is a flat surface containing an oil-like gel that when touched from the bottom creates nice changes in color and swirlly patterns. It fits nicely in your palm, and is a very entertaining and pleasurable way to occupy your hands and eyes while your mind is soaring. —fara forest

Lazer Discs

The wonders of holography have brought us these discs that spin like a top and reflect wonderful moving patterns under sunlight. Your average tripper exists in a more nocturnal environment, but a few of these and a flashlight are sure to elicit ohhs and ahhhs from any altered crowd. —fara forest

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Burning Man

lengthy lucid dream is alluring. And, while there is the reality of a police presence around Black Rock City, there is still no other place in the country where one can feel so psychologically safe to wander around out of one's mind—amid 15,000 people who have birthed a world that entertains, shocks and freaks the pants off you.

The attraction of Black Rock as Home has to do with the landscape that favors no one during the day and envelops everyone at night. There are very few people that are predisposed to live in the harsh conditions of the playa and so it seems equally (un)welcoming to everyone. Friendships are tested and either break or are strengthened. People explode and people sink into semi-consciousness. There is help when it is needed and there is whining about having to move. Then, as the sun sets and the city wakes from its heat-stupor, each denizen changes. They wake up to what appears to be a dream. At night, with the moon rising over the ridge, each person makes the moment to moment choice to explore the weirdness of the city itself or the weirdness of the mind, alone, out on the playa. Catharsis, epiphanies, life-changing decisions, falling in love and falling apart can come moments away from the noise, on the mental tundra. Illusions from the cities left behind dissolve in the starkness of Black Rock and new visions rise.

The moon descends, the eastern sky grows light and the drugs wear off. As the heat returns, the challenge is keeping the things one found in the dark on the playa. The lessons learned can feel so tied to the playa that it is difficult to retrieve them without the alkali beneath to remind. One finds pieces of Self that were unknown before landing on the playa. New selves are felt through the charged interactions with people and by the way self-perception is changed while facing the blank and endless landscape. To leave Black Rock is a struggle to bring back and integrate those new pieces from the dreamscape. [-]

Terence McKenna

I listened to Chomsky lecture on his first love, which is transformational grammar, and you just come out holding your head and muttering, "My god!" (Laughs) But I assume, without fully understanding it, that Chomsky has made a major field-redefining series of discoveries.

I don't think the ramifications of what he's done will be known for another 30 to 40 years, and he at the moment is very wary of what he's done because he's revolutionized the field of rhetoric. I mean it's gonna be hardball now.

Right. No, he's a great model and a very, very inspiring person. And relentless, as you must be in this social criticism.

(Laughs) Well, to go along with the common view you don't need any support to back you up. If you have a scent of an opinion you have to have thousands of references and citations. You must do the research.

You have to be impeccable, because they're gonna come after you every way they can think of. [-]

Rick Strassman

around: the church fashioned the psychedelic experience. Or if you still want to believe that there is free-standing information that comes from DMT, and not from the person who takes it, I will put it another way. The church setting maximized the chances that one would selectively receive certain types of information "from" the DMT.

The tea powered and strengthened the processes that could have taken place without the tea; it was jet fuel, rather than weak coffee. Put weak coffee into a 747, and you stay on the ground; put in jet fuel, and away you go. The tea increased emotions, suggestibility, and heightened thought processes, but the information, rules, teaching and ethics came from the people, not the drug. In the triad: drug, set and setting, the one that is least important, or most dispensable, is drug. The UDV church experience made this point even clearer to me.

How many of us really are willing to take the next step, and live a life fully informed and influenced by the psychedelic experience? Very few, and those who do generally stop taking psychedelics.

There are other unanswered questions that are more "fun" to think about, than "important." That is, where do the entities reside? What do they have to tell us, and how do we relate to them? Now, perhaps the more pressing unanswered question for me is: How do I tell this story in such a way as to not encourage people to take drugs? [-]



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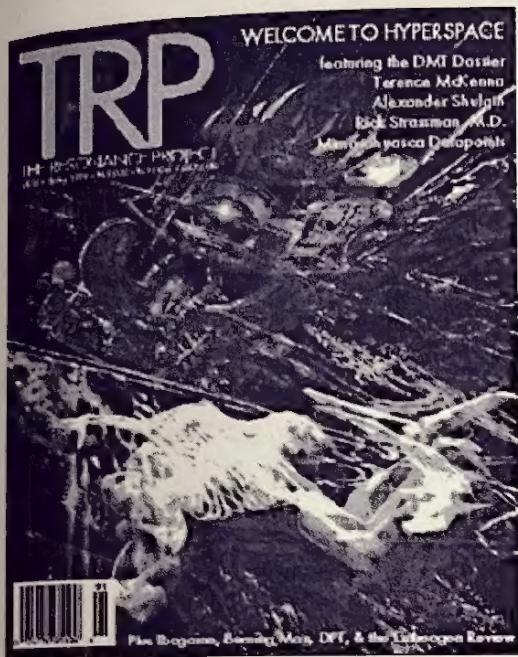
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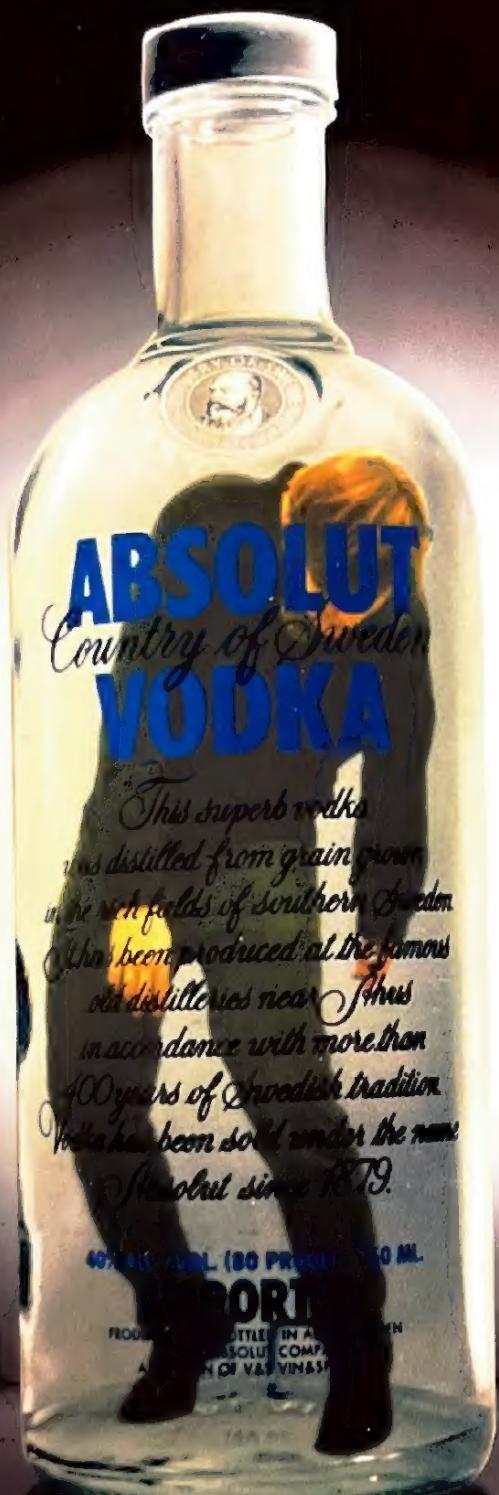
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the SCRYTCH page

scrytch is a little blue bucket at the end of the rope

imagine a lore which holds encased within a kernal indestructible;
imagine, further, that this kernal stands for light...

— when i come to my senses, i'm lying in a puddle of drool, or at least i'm lying on a drool-soaked pillow. there's a ca-LUNK! at the door, where the mail-chute usually sits all quiet-like. i glare at the clock across the room, which strikes seven just to spite me. up to a sit, the room swirls, back down to my bed; back up to a sit, back down. up, standing, stumble to the door, fall to the floor. more drool. a plain envelope has been pushed through my letterbox. inside is a keyring with two keys, one long, one short. the keyring has a flower on one side and burning coals on the other. there's also a sheaf of papers here, crude dot-matrix printout, guttertek direct from some scholar in Antarctica — so it says — who else could have known, GUM IS IN THE STATIC. i put the keys in my longjohns and take a peek at the first bits o' paper. reading in the morning? well, they were smug enough to count on it; guess no choice is left: "It is indeed funny enough, as in ha-ha-funny enough, the fact that the original manuscript has been misplaced [Parkerson, 16]. So of course you have to take or leave me at my word when i say that i found the manuscript in a long-since-forgotten anonymous FTP site. The text itself was spuriously dated, and i don't think its origin matters too much [particularly now that it is completely missing]. Nominally, it was a sort of guide or gazetteer to a city, the city of SOPOPOPAPOPIOPOLIS." aha. home sweet home. how odd, not odd enough, getting bored, occupational hazard — "I downloaded it with impunity, forgetting the site address immediately — that was how i behaved in those days — and brought it carefully into print format so that i could survey it at my leisure. Notice, then: once i had it in print form, i quickly erased my entire virtual copy; the thing was 'huge, almost gargantuan' [LaChance, 233]; it took up far too much space, that was it. And besides, of course, yes indeed, i always had the printed sheaf. Until, that is, the accident [Dorfmeier & Schrödelsneitzer, 882]. But this is digression." hm, why me, skim a few pages, let the as-yet-androgynous scholar get to said's point — "...there in my little room i began the process of going through the sheaf and marking this or that passage. Eventually i had a few sizeable notebooks of sheer speculation and survey-work on the city of SOPOPOPAPOPIOPOLIS as represented within the gazetteer. i drew up maps and images from the flashes in my mind, and to me SOPOPOPAPOPIOPOLIS became alive. i excerpted bits and pieces of its books and reports and news-articles to feed my own curiosity. Of course, exhaustive searches of all known atlases and socio geopolitical surveys turned up naught [Babamique, viii]..." blargh. *flip flip flip* "...all of this is in the way of preamble. What i am asking for is help. SOPOPOPAPOPIOPOLIS must be reconstructed. It is the only place to go. i have reason to believe that when everything goes to hell, SOPOPOPAPOPIOPOLIS will be the only place left. And even it will not be able to help us if we do not, can not, or will not reconstruct it as best we can. 'Bits and pieces' [Smith, 307] of it are everywhere; much of it is wrapped up in this mass of text, this lowly scrytch-phile. It is not the city itself that matters so much as it is one particular curiosity about it: SOPOPOPAPOPIOPOLIS was intimately connected with all of the dreams we have given up for lost; it was and is a sort of 'dead-letter-office' for humanity's dreams. i swear it. Besides, the place apparently swarmed with alley-kitties. And these alley-kitties did nothing but dream and wander, dream and wander, all day and night. They left trails in reality that we could perhaps follow if we could only find a way into their feline visions. At a certain point in the ostensible history of SOPOPOPAPOPIOPOLIS, you see, all of the kats disappeared, all at once. With them went all the bugs; seeking out a connection in that regard is perhaps unwise at this point, certainly distasteful..." hm, kitties everywhere these days, wonder what that makes o' this mess, skim, skim, ap—! "...and then there is the matter of the missing elephants." well, by Gum. now, that is a problem. i look around for the author, hack up a goober for t' spit in 's eye; finding none, i swallow, put the sheaf slowly back in the packet, saving the rest for later. i take the shiny keys out of me longjohn pockets. they sit there, an innocent, oblivious look in their sheen... quite clearly, something is afoot. two slices of toast, two cups of tea, two packettes of wiz and the day is set to begin. i gaze out the winder for a momentary two. eating up the murky morning distance, SOPOPOPAPOPIOPOLIS shimmies and stretches like the industrial-strength cybermatic alley-kittie it is. "i could snap your neck like a twig," i whisper. "meow." step out the front door with an empty shiver in the process of fading to grey; dawn streets in silent english drizzle; a child's woollen mitten; broken glass;

fertile ground in which the seeds of dreams and of nightmares will flourish, so long as there is language
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